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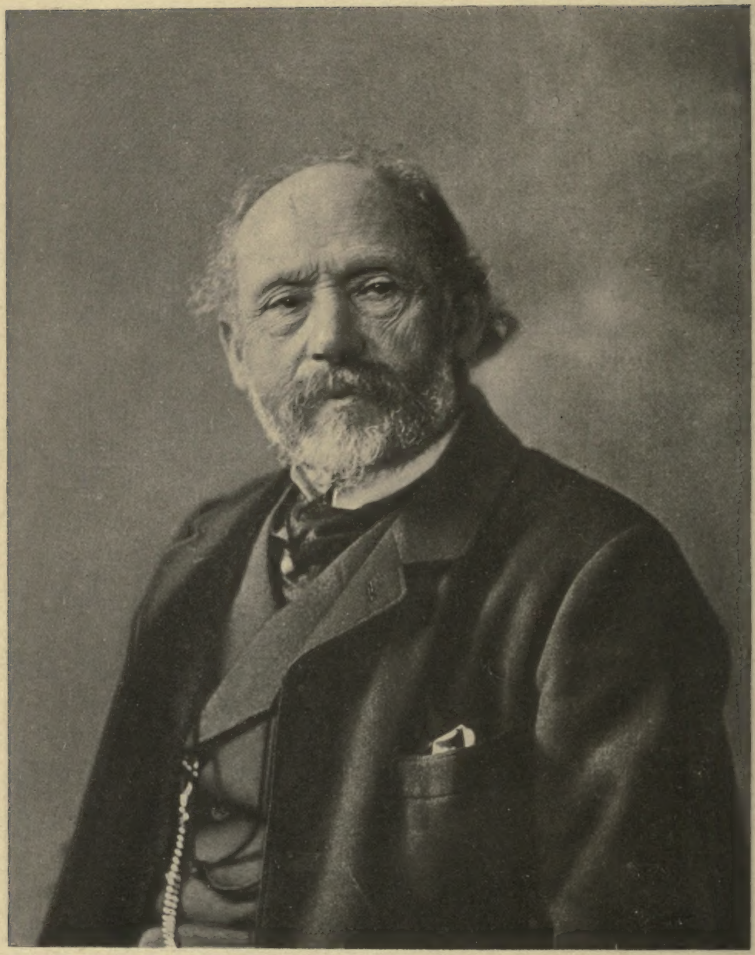

THE STORY OF MY STRUGGLES

THE MEMOIRS OF ARMINIUS VAMBÉRY

PROFESSOR OF ORIENTAL LANGUAGES
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BUDAPEST

VOLUME I

SECOND IMPRESSION

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Preface

AUTHORS of Autobiographies are much exposed to fall into self-glorification. If I nevertheless have undertaken to write the following pages, I have done so because of the unexpectedly favourable criticism which the first two chapters of my book —*Life and Adventures of Arminius Vambéry, Written by Himself*— met with in England and in America. In this book I tried to lay before the public an account of such travels and wanderings of mine as were not comprised in my first book on Central Asia, and in addition I thought it advisable to give a few outlines of my juvenile adventures and struggles. Strange to say it was the narrative of the latter which elicited the particular interest of my readers, as I noticed from the many letters I received from the most distant parts of Europe and America.

Well, I said to myself, if such short sketches of my curious career have evoked this interest on the part of my readers, what will be the impression if I draw the picture of my whole life and of all the

vicissitudes I went through from my childhood to my present old age? This is the main reason of the issue of the present volumes. Keeping in mind the Oriental proverb, "To speak of his own self is the business of the Shaitan," I have reluctantly touched upon many topics connected with my personality, but events are mostly inseparable from actors, and besides I have found encouragement in recalling the appreciation Britons and Americans are habitually ready to accord to the career of self-made men.

There are besides other motives which have served as incentives to these pages. The various stages of my life have been passed in various countries and societies, and a personal record of men and events dating from half a century back may not be without interest to the present generation. Unchecked by conventional modesty and false shame, I have related all I went through in plain and unadorned words, and if I have not concealed facts relating to my very humble origin and to the mistakes I committed, neither have I thought it necessary to leave unmentioned the result of my labours and the honours entailed by them. It is now forty years ago since I had first the honour of coming before the British public, and my desire to be thoroughly known by it may be pardoned.

A. VAMBÉRY.

Contents

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

MY ANTECEDENTS AND INFANCY 1

CHAPTER II.

JUVENILE STRUGGLES 33

CHAPTER III.

THE PRIVATE TUTOR 69

CHAPTER IV.

MY FIRST JOURNEY TO THE EAST 105

CHAPTER V.

MY SECOND JOURNEY TO THE EAST 161

CHAPTER VI.

THE RETURN TO EUROPE 203

My Antecedents and Infancy

CHAPTER I

MY ANTECEDENTS AND INFANCY

"*Cogito ergo sum!*" Yes, I am here, but the date of my birth I cannot positively state, as I have no means of ascertaining it. I had the problematic good fortune to be born of Jewish parents, and as at that time the Jews in Hungary were not compelled by law to be regularly registered, and the authorities were satisfied with such scanty information as the parish documents afforded, I have not been able to get any official certificate as to the date of my birth. My mother told me that I was born shortly before my father's death on St. Joseph's Day, and as my father was one of the last victims of the cholera which began to scourge the land in 1830, I cannot be far wrong in giving the year of my birth as 1831 or 1832.

Genealogy not being one of my favourite subjects, I will not trouble the reader with a detailed account of my pedigree. As far as I know, my great-great-grandfather came from the worthy little town of Bamberg, and when the Emperor Joseph II. com-

manded his Jewish subjects to take a surname, my grandfather, who was born in Hungary, took the name of the town of his ancestors, and was entered as Bamberger. As time went on the "B" was changed into "W," and my father wrote his name as Wamberger, although he made but little use of this registered name, for in those days the Orthodox Jews followed the Oriental custom, according to which the father's name is the one generally used, and the family name is merely of official importance. My father was not only a devout Jew, but also a distinguished Talmudist who often spent whole days and nights in study, without troubling himself much about mundane affairs. Religious zeal and love of learning are the two powerful levers of this especially Jewish erudition, and its disciples who regard intellectual and religious attainments as one and the same thing necessarily live in a visionary world into which none but theologians of Asiatic creeds can penetrate, and which has long since been closed to Christian divines, whose doctrines are so permeated with scepticism. According to my mother's saying, my father must have caught this fever of fanatical enthusiasm in his early youth. In ordinary life he was diffident and awkward, and when he came to woo her in her father's house at Lundenburg, in Moravia, his appearance had caused much secret amusement to the girls of the Malavan family. But my mother, a beautiful girl of eighteen, had soon taken a liking to the bashful

young scholar, who had bright eyes and pleasant features to recommend him. She had been brought up by a stepmother, and from her earliest youth had tasted many a time from the bitter cup of life. She hoped to find happiness at the side of an earnest and religious-minded man, and so easily yielded to the persuasions of her Orthodox father, and left her home and her birthplace to follow the Talmudist, of whom as yet she knew but little, into Hungary to the town of St. Georghen, in the Presburger county, where my father, as a native of the place, hoped to get the appointment of under-rabbi.

But, as is only too well known, theologians of all times and religions have always evinced an unconquerable hatred, jealousy, and bitterness towards men of their own profession, and the darts thrown by the religious zealot are known to be far more venomous than those of the hunter after worldly treasures. The Talmudists of St. Georghen, whose number must of necessity have been very limited, were not exempt from this vice, and as my father's quiet, modest nature could not cope with his antagonists, the hope of preferment vanished more and more into the background, and the darkened horizon of the poor man's future was now only illumined by the steady glimmer of his enthusiasm for his studies. While musing and speculating upon the intricacies of the Mishna and Gemara, the good man quite forgot that the modest dowry which my

mother had brought with her could not last for ever, and was not inexhaustible like the bottomless discussions and arguments of his favourite study, and that in order to live one had to look beyond the world of books into the busy market-place of everyday life. Soon my mother had to rouse him to the realisation of this cruel necessity. She was fully aware of the gravity of the situation, and all the ways and means by which the clever but young and inexperienced woman had tried to ward off the evil day proved fruitless. At one time she advised her husband to commence a fruit and corn business, then they tried to keep a public-house, but when everything failed the pious Talmudist was forced to become a hawker, and buying the agricultural products from the farmers in the neighbouring villages to try to sell them again at a small profit. What terrible martyrdom this must have been to the inspired Talmudist—to leave his study and his books and to go hawking among the raw Slavonic peasants of the neighbourhood! What self-sacrifice, to leave the multi-coloured, visionary fields of "Halacha" and "Hagada," and to descend to the vulgar occupation of bargaining and bartering for a sack of beans or peas, a sheep- or a goat-skin. My mother often recalled it with tears in her eyes, for she was deeply attached to my father. She shared his enthusiasm for study, she sympathised in his mental struggles, but the voice of hunger is peremptory; she encouraged and helped

him, and my poor father hardly ever lost his patience. One wet day in autumn, having bought a cowhide, yet damp, from a butcher at Ratzersdorf, he flung it over his shoulder on the top of a heavy load he was carrying. Thus laden he reached home late in the evening, wet through and tired out after wading through the deep mud. My mother awaited him with the frugal evening meal, but he, throwing down his load on the floor, went straight into his little study, where he buried himself in his books; and when my mother, tired of waiting, came to look for him, she found him as deep in his studies as if he had been sitting there the whole day. A man of such habits and tendencies was not likely to succeed in looking after the temporary needs of his family. It is therefore not surprising that my mother, with her practical common sense, at last came to the conclusion that it would be best to leave her husband to his books, and herself to look after the support of the family. And so my mother became a business woman. She went out into the world while my father sat at home in his study and took care of the house. A sad change of places, which pleased my mother only in so far as, being a pious Jewess, she thought she was doing a work well pleasing to God. But the interests of the family suffered greatly, for as she was inexperienced in the struggle for existence, our poverty increased rapidly, and when the destroying angel, the cholera, at that time ravaging Europe, swept

over North-West Hungary also, and snatched away my father, my mother, at the age of twenty-two, was left a widow with two children in the greatest distress.

This terrible blow, the misery of it, and the feeling of loneliness in a strange land filled the young, energetic woman with unwonted activity. She took a young companion from Lundenburg into the house to look after the children, in order that she might devote herself more entirely to her business. She laboured without interruption, and in the second year of her widowhood she had the satisfaction of seeing her cellar stocked with good wine, her storehouse full of corn, and her inn one of the most frequented in the little town of St. Georghen. She was getting on very well indeed, but in order to extend her business she thought a man's support was necessary, so she married again. Her husband was a young man of her own age, who came from Duna Szerdahely, and was now to be the father of the orphans (*i.e.*, my sister and myself) and my mother's protector and companion. Whether my mother was induced to take this step under the pretext used by all young widows, or whether she really needed assistance, I cannot and dare not investigate. One thing is certain, she did not improve her condition, for Mr. Fleischmann, as her second husband was called, was a kind-hearted, easy-going man, but by no means industrious or enterprising. He helped to spend the money, but

not to make it. And when, after the first year, my mother upbraided him for his idleness, he declared that here, among strangers, he should never get on, but if my mother would go with him to his native town he was sure that there, surrounded by his relatives and friends, he should be far better able to attend to his duties as head of the family.

And so it came about that my mother, and we with her, left St. Georghen and settled at Duna Szerdahely, from which place I date my intellectual awakening, for I look upon this town, and not the one where I first beheld the light, as my real birthplace. I must at that time have been about three years old, and my recollections of my first home are very vague indeed. But I clearly remember one scene. I was playing about under the big oblong table of the public room, while on the knobs round about the table small miniature loaves were strung together, which I ate one after the other, for even then I was known for my large appetite. These gastric feats were interrupted by the entrance of several guests, who playfully blew the froth of their beer glasses down upon me. It gave me a fright which I remember to this day. Other incidents of my infancy have also left a vague impression upon my mind. Thus, for instance, I remember quite distinctly the morning when I got up with a pain in my foot, and began to limp. Coxalgia had then taken hold of me, and I began to go lame with my

left leg, an affliction for which no cure could be found, as will be further related in the course of this narrative. I can slightly remember our move, which was effected on a large waggon, but I have no distinct recollection of anything during the first two or three years in Duna Szerdahely, my adopted native town.

Where other children find roses on their path, and the blue sky of golden youth is for ever smiling down upon them, I found nothing but thorns, privation, and misery. It soon became evident that our stepfather, as already mentioned, although a good-hearted man, possessed none of those qualities which everybody needs in the struggle of life; how much more, then, a man who has a whole family dependent upon him! The small capital which my mother had brought with her from St. Georghen soon dwindled away. Poverty entered the house and peace departed, and the children had to suffer much through the mother's ever-increasing despondency. The public-house had to be given up, and we tried a fresh departure, viz., the sale of leeches. This was a sort of family trade of the Fleischmanns in Duna Szerdahely, or rather a miserable sort of hawker's business. The brothers Fleischmann bought from the peasants the leeches found in abundance in the neighbouring swamps, and after sorting them they sold them to the apothecaries of Northern Hungary.

At a very early age I was initiated into the details of the trade. The leeches had to be sorted

according to size, and put in linen bags about 40 centimeters long; they were bathed twice in the twenty-four hours, an operation at which the children assisted, but I had great difficulty in overcoming a feeling of repugnance when I had to separate the wretched creatures from the slimy substance. It happened sometimes that the leeches escaped in the night from the bag, if it had not been securely enough fastened, and crawled about in the room which served us all as bedroom. As we children had to sleep on the floor, for lack of a bedstead, sometimes the one, sometimes the other of us would wake with a sudden fright, for the hungry animals used to get hold of our toes, or some other member, and quietly begin to suck. Then, of course, there was a general commotion; the creatures had to be searched for with a light, and replaced in the bag. The tragi-comedy of these nocturnal scenes highly amused us children.

The weal and the woe of the family, which meanwhile had increased from four to six and seven, depended entirely upon the demand for, and the price of, leeches. In Hungary, bleeding was still in fashion, but as medical science in its steady growth began to prohibit all methods for reducing the blood, the demand for leeches necessarily became less; and as their value decreased, the poverty in our home increased. The rosy days of childhood were for me days of suffering and privation and want. Sometimes the pinch of poverty was terrible

to bear, especially when my stepfather was on one of his hawking tours, which often took weeks. Then, when the money he had left behind had come to an end, we had to live on black bread, potatoes cooked in various ways, beans, peas, and lentils. Coffee and milk were luxuries, and meat we only had in very small portions on Saturdays and feast-days. Many a time we had not even bread, and I have a lively recollection of the queer manner in which we managed to get hold of some. Our house, a poor, dilapidated little place on a level with the ground, stood at the extreme end of the little town, on the borders of a willow-grove, and close to the large piece of waste ground where wandering gipsies used to set up their black tents. Thus at a very early age I became interested in gipsy life. I distinctly remember the camp of these brown children of the East. Some of them were almost naked, others dressed in rags, but never failed to display large silver buttons on their tattered garments. My first impressions of nomadic life I received through these people. They belonged to the tribe known in Hungary as the "Wallachian Gipsies," a remarkable people, wilder and more lawless than the half-civilised tribes. They lived by stealing, fortune-telling, and tinkering, and were so hardened that in the bitterest weather they would camp in the open. The next morning the children would be packed into a kind of feather-bed, which was slung over the horse's head, forming bags on

either side; and so the journey was resumed, the mother generally sitting on the horse, the bigger boys and the men going on foot.

The road leading to the villages situated on the island Schütt, between Duna Szerdahely and Komorn, went past our house, and as on Fridays all the beggars of the neighbourhood were allowed to beg for alms of any description in the market-places, mendicants of all ages and both sexes might be seen on such days making their way past our house towards those places. The picture of the horrible, motley caravan of feigned and real cripples, blind, dumb, and lame folks, of lepers and paralytics, in their dirty, tattered garments, fills me with dismay even now. The phantoms of the past are ever before my eyes. And it was with these miserable, offensive creatures that I had to barter on Friday afternoons for the bread and other victuals they had collected during the day—money seldom came their way—in exchange for one or two bottles of brandy. It was indeed a bitter piece of bread, grudgingly bestowed by dirty, sickly hands. Nevertheless, it was welcome food to us in our starving condition. In my earliest youth I made the acquaintance of that terrible spectre, hunger, and even in subsequent stages of my life he has often been my companion; my battles with this monster were certainly not amongst the lightest I have had to fight.

In spite of everything I grew up strong and healthy, and, with the exception of one illness when

I was three years old—and of which I have some remembrance, because my mother, in obedience to a superstition prevalent in Hungary, sold me for a few kreuzer to another woman, in the hope that God would ward off the impending danger, and be moved to clemency towards the possibly sinless new mother—I have not known a day's illness in the whole of my life. From early spring till late autumn I went about generally barefooted and scantily clothed. In the summer I slept by preference in the yard, under the overhanging roof of our house, instead of in the close bedroom, and I slept so soundly that not even a thunderstorm roused me until my naked feet were soaking wet with the pouring rain. My rosy, chubby cheeks, my bright, black eyes, and my curly hair found favour with the women folk; and whenever I came in the market-place the farmers' wives petted and fondled me, and always made the same remark, "Pity the little Jew is crooked." Personally, I did not trouble much about this bodily defect. With my crutch tucked under the left arm, I went about quite happily, and even tried to run races with my companions. But when I had to give up the race on account of my lame leg, and came home crying, my mother used to comfort me with the words: "My child, thou wilt do better than any of thy companions, but thou must have patience and perseverance."

My bodily affliction, however, was a grievous

thorn in my mother's eye. Her vanity was wounded, and her one aim and object was to rid me of the evil. What has she not done to effect this? The ways and means by which she endeavoured to cure me pass all description. The most out-of-the-way remedies and magic cures were resorted to. I was not only bathed in various kinds of herbs, rubbed with all possible and imaginable salves and greases, but the strangest magic charms were tried at my expense. And when everything failed I was placed at midnight at the crossing of the road, to fall under the spell of passing old gipsy women. But worst of all were the experiments of miracle-mongers or quacks. At one time one such appeared in the shape of a Catholic priest, in the village of Rudnó, in North Hungary, and no sooner had my mother heard of him than she left the family in charge of her relatives, and undertook the long, laborious journey to find him. As there were no railways, we travelled on foot, a charitable farmer sometimes giving us a lift on his loaded cart. And so we trudged on for many weary days, until the wretched little village was reached. My poor destitute mother had to slip a fee into the hand of the landlady of this clerical charlatan before we could be admitted, but the gentleman of the black cowl did not waste many words with his patients. He casually looked at my crooked leg, wrote a prescription—the apothecary being partner in this holy business—and I was dismissed with the promise

of a speedy recovery. Even to this day I marvel how my mother, a thoroughly clever, capable woman —although she could neither read nor write—was so desperately entangled in the meshes of superstition, and that no amount of disillusion could save her from falling into the same error again.

The uselessness of the Rudnó prescription was still fresh in our minds, when the fame of a new Wonder-doctor in the village of Gròb, in the Neutraer county, was spread abroad, and my mother at once set out again. The miraculous cure-worker this time was not a priest, but an ordinary, ignorant peasant who could neither read nor write. We went to see him at his farm, and when he heard that there was good wine to be had in Duna Szerdahely, he at once offered to go home with us to effect the cure. A cure indeed! So barbarously cruel and drastic was the remedy, that no man with any proper feeling would have subjected an animal to it. For five days running my leg had to be held over hot vapours every morning for a certain length of time to soften the sinews and fibres, as the peasant-doctor explained. Then on the sixth day the great operation took place. My mother was sent out of the house, and I was made to lie down on the floor, two strong gipsies acting as assistants, holding me tight, the one by the shoulders, the other by the feet. Then the peasant threw himself with all his weight upon the crippled knee, which formed almost a right angle. A terrible crash—and I knew

no more. When I came to myself again, my poor weeping mother was on her knees beside me. She caressed me and gave me something to drink. The injured leg was now put between rough wooden splints and tightly bandaged. Curative measures of this kind were in vogue in Hungary in 1836, and they are so still, not only in Hungary, but in other countries of civilised Europe! Of course the operation was without success. When the splints were removed, and I could go about again, the old mischief returned, the crutch had again to be resorted to, and I have gone through life limping, not altogether to my disadvantage, as the subsequent pages will show.

Apart from this bodily defect I enjoyed good health as a child, notwithstanding the chary and very primitive nourishment I received, and in spite of the many miseries to which I was exposed on account of insufficient clothing. Sometimes I was inclined to envy the better lot of my schoolfellows and companions, and was unhappy in consequence, but this early hardening process was the very best training I could have had for my later career. The sufferings and privations I had later to bear as Mohammedan mendicant friar seemed to me not much harder nor more trying than what I had to go through in my youth.

This much as regards my physical bringing up. As for my intellectual accomplishments, the reader must first be made acquainted with the literary

demands which, to the Orthodox Jew of those days, were inseparable from a righteous and God-fearing life. Just as the Mohammedan understands by learning merely religious knowledge, by erudition merely a thorough acquaintance with the Koran and ritualistic observances, and sees the ideal of education only in theological accomplishments, so also the Jew regards a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures as the only essential thing, and the study of the Talmud is his chief accomplishment. Young lads, therefore, are first of all taught to read Hebrew, and when they have become familiar with the letters of the foreign tongue, they proceed to translate the Hebrew text according to a very primitive method. They are told a few words here and there, and have to make out the sense as best they can. Then, as a third stage, they come to the grammar, the actual study of the language. Schools in general were conducted much on the same primitive principle. Any Jew with a sufficient knowledge of the Holy Scriptures was authorised to set up an educational establishment, and the success of the school depended in most cases upon the greatest number of successful pupils and on the smallness of the school fees. The pedagogic talent of the teacher also carried some weight, *i.e.*, whether he made much or little use of the birch rod; for the schools where stripes and swollen cheeks were not so frequent were naturally favoured by soft-hearted mothers. I received my elementary education in a

third-rate school; but an inborn brightness of intellect and good memory enabled me soon to rise above my schoolfellows, and I was qualified to enter the best-known school of the place at a much reduced fee. I learned with pleasure and facility, and had a special liking for learning by heart. I had but to read a Hebrew text two or three times to be able to say it off by heart without much prompting. The teacher had noticed this, and of course my mother knew it, for she used to say, "His father was a great scholar, he is bound to have plenty of brains."

Nevertheless she kept me rigorously at my lessons, and when I went to bed I had to put my books, often big folios, under my pillow, "for," said my mother, "knowledge will get into thine head over night, right through the bolster," which I believed literally. Yes, my mother was a remarkable woman. Blind superstition and rare common sense alternated in her. She had a most extraordinary energy, and was a type of the Jewess of the Middle Ages, full of ancient principles and maxims, sometimes showing themselves in a tenacious clinging to the old faith, sometimes conforming to existing circumstances. If there was a thunderstorm in the night she would quickly make a light, open the Bible at the Creation story, and exclaim, "Behold, O God, Thou hast created the world, destroy not Thine own handiwork." Her memory was marvellous. She could remember the smallest details of her early childhood, and told

me often what her mother had said to her about the Frenchmen after the battle of Austerlitz. How they overran the country in the neighbourhood of Lundenburg, and how the grenadiers forced their way into the houses, crying for "*Café! Café, sacré nom de Dieu!*" I think I must have inherited my memory from my mother.

My knowledge up to my eighth year consisted chiefly of the Pentateuch with commentary, the Prophets, and other Biblical stories, besides Hungarian and German, reading and writing. I felt quite at home in the five books of Moses, and in the Prophets I was sufficiently versed to recite and translate long passages from Isaiah, Jeremiah, Treassar, and other Holy Scriptures. These accomplishments gave me a certain standing among my schoolfellows, and the teacher used to bring me forward as a kind of specimen of his teaching; for whenever a father came to the school to introduce his promising offspring, I was called up and examined to prove by my answers the zeal and skill of the teacher.

To be thus gazed at in one's youth has its dangers, for it is apt to make one somewhat vain, and it might easily have grown into self-conceit if my mother's warning words had not from time to time acted like a shower-bath on the fire of my youthful imagination. "Thou art nothing yet, thou knowest nothing yet," said she; "the son of my first husband must be the first of all the boys."

And what my mother meant by *the first* was not confined to the Jewish schools at Duna Szerdahely. For she intended me to excel not only in Jewish but also in Christian learning. Devout and God-fearing though she was, she seems soon to have come to the conclusion that the study of Thora and Talmud may be all very well to open the gates of Paradise, but that they are of little use to help one on in the world, and that under the altered conditions of the time the disposition which reduced my father to beggary would be of still less use to me. In short, my mother had made up her mind that I was to relinquish the study of Jewish religion and direct my attention to a worldly career, and that the son of the Rabbi and Talmudist was to become a universal scholar. The boldness of this plan can only be fully appreciated by those who have known some of the aspirations of the life, the ways of thinking, and the horrible fanaticism of the Jews of those days.

In my youth the Jewish community of Duna Szerdahely had the reputation of being the most devout, the most zealous congregation of Hungary, in no wise tinged with doctrinal innovations; the most devout of all Europe, in fact, with the exception of a few Russian and Polish communities, celebrated for their Chasidendon, or zeal. It was a piece of pure unalloyed mediæval conceit, with all its wildly fanatical fancies and impossibilities; a pure counterfeit of that religious

life the dark shadow of which in my after life, during my sojourn with the Moslems of Bokhara, has filled me with horror. In this superabundance of religious enthusiasm, in this frightful labyrinth of ritualistic cavilling and grievous superstition, I spent my childhood. Summer and winter, early in the morning and late at night, I never neglected at the first sound of the wooden hammer on the door—this replaced the bell which calls the Jews to worship—to speed towards the synagogue, where my strong young voice at a very early age was heard above all the worshippers, and stamped me as a boy of marked Divine favour.

I would rather have died of hunger than have taken a mouthful of food which had not been prepared according to the established ritual, or than partake of meat or milk food without observing the necessary interval of six hours, or, worst of all, than incur pollution by contact with that most monstrous of all creatures—the swine! For fear of baring my head I wore my cap right down over my ears, and when some mischievous Christian lads once forcibly took it from me, I trembled all over like an aspen leaf, and imagined that I should straightway be committed to the awful tortures of the Gehenna. In order not to have to say the word *Kreutz* (cross), I always said *Schmeitzer* instead of *Kreutzer*. When I passed a crucifix I always turned my head the other way, and murmured words of disgust, or secretly spat on the

ground. If by chance on Saturday, the day of absolute rest, I found a copper or silver coin on the ground, I pushed it along with my foot (as it was a sin to touch it with my hand), and in holy dread covered it up with dust and dirt, so that I might find it again next day. A religion which has to instruct its confessors in these minutest details, which prescribes how he must eat, drink, walk, stand, sleep, dress, cleanse his body outwardly and inwardly; how to associate with women and how to comport himself during different natural occurrences — such a religion necessarily exercises a profound influence upon the youthful mind, it absorbs him entirely, it captivates his senses and his thoughts. I found exactly the same thing in after years among the Moslem youths of Turkey and Persia. There, as here, faith really manifests itself merely in outward appearances, in a ritual which is observed with the greatest exactitude, and it is therefore not surprising that the young Jew, like the Moslem, when in after years he begins to inquire into things for himself, breaks the fetters and becomes a freethinker. This total revolution of ideas may be explained as the natural result when two such widely different elements come into contact with each other.

The transformation necessarily depends to a great extent upon the natural tendencies of the individual. As long as I attended the Jewish school, and all contact with the Christian world

was prohibited, there could of course be no question of scepticism with me. It was really my mother who gave the initiative; for, as already mentioned, she meant me to have a secular education. Regardless of the harsh criticism of our fellow-believers, she removed me from the Jewish school, and placed me in the elementary school maintained by the Protestant community. Here I was taught from Christian books, attended the catechising, and received such elementary notions of geography and natural history as the extremely primitive school-books then in use in Hungary were able to furnish. The description of the earth was contained in a little book in verse, called "Kis tükör," or "Small Mirror." Natural history was limited to the description of a few animals, and instead of the Hungarian mother-tongue we were initiated into the elements of Latin. It was, to say the best of it, very meagre fare which Christian culture vouchsafed to me, but it was so totally different from my former studies, which dealt only with events that happened thousands of years ago, that even these scanty morsels convinced me of the greater sustaining power and interest of the intellectual food here offered. The intercourse with Christian companions of my own age also made me freer and less prejudiced, for I played with them and made friends, without, however, entering their houses or touching the food and cakes they offered. This, both my mother and I

felt, would be rank apostasy, and would be going a little too far for the only son of the former rabbi! But the ice was broken. True, I had not yet dared to climb over the wall of partition which, on account of my bringing up, separated me from the outer world, but I began to cast furtive glances over to the other side, and when my mother, little by little, made me familiar with the idea of following a secular career and becoming a doctor, the thick clouds of orthodox religious views soon dispersed, the horizon widened, and with ecstasy my childish eye roamed over those distant regions of delight.

I may have been about ten years old then. My plans for the future were made, but the means to carry them out cost my dear mother unspeakable anxiety. The poverty and misery of the family had now reached a climax. My elder sister had already gone to service, and in order that I might not take the bread out of the children's mouths my mother made up her mind, though with a heavy heart, to send me also out of the house. I went as apprentice to a lady tailoress, whose son I instructed in the Hebrew language, in return for which she boarded me and initiated me in the mysteries of sewing together light cotton and linen materials.

The three hours which I spent in the fulfilment of my pedagogic duties were pleasant enough. It flattered my vanity to teach a boy of my own age, but all the more disagreeable was the time which I

had to spend sitting at the round table among my companions and the more advanced pupils in the tailor's trade. Here I had always to bear mocking remarks about my clumsiness; they were always finding fault with me, and often gave me palpable instruction how to hold my needle and thimble, how not to crush the stuff unnecessarily, and so on. In short, the initiation into the noble art of tailoring was embittered for me to such an extent that after the first month had elapsed I complained to my mother with tears. She realised the mistake she had made, and encouraged me to hold out at least until the winter was past and she should have secured a good appointment for me. It cost me much to consent, but my mother's admonitions and the consciousness that during the bitter winter weather I should at least have a warm room and tolerable food, whereas I used to have to go all the way to school scantily dressed and with a few warm potatoes in my pocket for breakfast, conquered at last. I became reconciled to my disagreeable lot, until with the awakening of the spring the hope of improving my condition also awoke in me, and glimmers of future possibilities rose before my mind's eye.

I had now reached my eleventh year, and made up my mind to leave not only my home, but also the town in which my mother, the only being who cared for me, lived.

To set out into the world at eleven years of age,

in poverty and misery, with a crutch as companion, away from a mother's loving sympathy, henceforth to wander among strangers, and to be subject to their cold gaze, surely this is a cruel trial and hard to bear for a young, sensitive child. The thought of it frightened me; it weighed me down and forced tears from my eyes—tears which flowed the more abundantly when I saw by my mother's red eyes that she also struggled in vain to keep them down.

But what was to be done? In my dire distress and utter helplessness there seemed no other way open to reach that goal to which my natural propensities appeared to point. My mother encouraged me by saying, "Thou canst not and darest not be an ordinary man. The spirit of thy learned father is in thee. Thou must study and become a doctor; and in order to commence thy studies at the college of St. Georghen, where thy name is known and they will take an interest in thee, thou must earn a few florins first, for I can give thee at best only a change of linen and a suit of clothes for the journey. Yes, my child, thou wilt have much to bear, many hardships to suffer, but mark what I say—we must not mind the trouble. *During the first part of the night we must prepare the bed on which to stretch ourselves during the latter part.*"

Such and similar admonitions and encouraging words were oft repeated. They steeled my courage, and when the appointment of teacher in the house

of the Jewish inn-keeper in the village of Nyék—about two hours' distant from Duna Szerdahely—was offered to me, I accepted it gratefully, and accompanied by my mother, with my crutch and a small bundle on my back, I left the place where I had spent the days of my childhood, to undertake the office which was to furnish me with the means to commence my new career.

Leaving the dusty road for a short cut across the fields, we soon reached Nyék; and when my mother introduced me to my future principal, the man curiously eyed the insignificant, poorly dressed appearance of the crippled teacher, and during the low, whispered conversation I frequently caught the words, "Too young, too small." A Jew from Szerdahely who knew me happened to be present; he was kind enough to speak a good word for me by saying, "Never mind the outside; it's the inside you want. The lad is crammed full of book-learning; he knows the Prayer-book and the Pentateuch by heart, and if Moritz—that was the name of my future pupil—has but a spark of intelligence in him, he will get on well with him."

Meanwhile the mother and the son had also come in, and while the former gazed with a scarcely concealed smile, as if to say, "He will hardly be a match for my Moritz," the latter glared at me with open dislike, and tearing himself away from his mother he ran into the garden. Such a recep-

tion was not calculated to inspire me with courage, or to paint my future duties as mentor in too rose-coloured a light. I stood there for some time perplexed and broken-hearted; and it was the more difficult to collect myself, as the pain of having to part with my dear mother took all my spirit away. My mother, of course, suffered still more keenly, but not a trace of her inner struggle did she betray; she remained a little while longer with me, and, after warmly embracing me, she took her leave and went with me into the garden. Stepping lightly over the threshold, and looking back only once or twice she swiftly walked home the same way we had come. There I stood, broken-hearted, gazing after my mother as she disappeared in the distance, and overcome with sorrow I sank down, kissed the threshold which her foot had so lately touched, and cried bitter tears of despair over the hardness of my lot.

From this prostrate condition I was suddenly roused by a rough touch on the shoulder, and when I looked round Moritz stood before me. He grinned and said, "Teacher, come to dinner." Obeying this summary call, I entered the room where the family was already seated at table, but I could hardly touch anything, and although some good-natured souls tried to cheer me up, several days passed before I could get used to the new condition of things and properly fulfil such duties as were entrusted to me. For I was not only

teacher, but also house-servant and waiter. Four hours a day I had to instruct "dear Moritz" in writing, reading, and arithmetic, and in the Pentateuch, but early in the morning and late in the evening I had to provide the peasants going to or coming back from the field with wine and brandy, and on Friday afternoons—*i.e.*, before the beginning of the Sabbath—I had to clean the boots of all the family and brush the clothes. How my master came upon the idea of combining these various offices, and making me the "boy of all work," as I had specially been engaged as teacher, is a mystery to me to this day. The Oriental says, "Man loads the ass as much as he can, but not as he (the ass) likes," and this proverb the innkeeper of Nyék seems to have followed. I performed my duties to the best of my ability; but I soon noticed that whereas the peasants always found the measure of spirituous liquor offered to them too small or too deficient, my pupil found the time of intellectual "dressing" always far too long, and together with his mother complained to his father that I overburdened his mind. If I had not made the mistake of treating my pupil, out of school hours, as my companion and playmate—which seemed so natural because we were of the same age—I might perhaps have impressed him more, but the anomaly of attempting to combine in one person playfellow and teacher revenged itself bitterly upon me; for once when, carried away by

my professional zeal, I upbraided my pupil in rather strong language for his carelessness and stupidity, the rascal, who was much bigger and stronger than I, attacked me, threw me on the floor, gave me a terrible thrashing, and when at last my cries brought his mother on the scene, she had much difficulty in liberating me from the hands of my obstreperous pupil. The "dear boy" received a reprimand for the impropriety of his behaviour, and then things went on as usual. This first failure of my pedagogic capability was followed by many others. In my capacity of waiter and shoe-black I could, to a certain extent, maintain the credit and dignity of my office, but as teacher I was less fortunate, since occasional fits of playfulness and merriment did not agree with the gravity of my position as mentor. I soon wearied of my false position, and counted myself fortunate indeed when the six months were over and I could return to Szerdahely with my earnings—*eight florins* (sixteen shillings) —in my pocket.

Juvenile Struggles

VAMBÉRY IN HIS EIGHTEENTH YEAR

To face Page 35.

CHAPTER II

JUVENILE STRUGGLES

My visit to my home was very pleasant; instead of the cold surroundings I had been used to among strangers, I now met on all sides loving glances from my brothers and sisters, and more especially from my mother, who was proud of the son who had already earned eight bright silver florins. She entertained the greatest hopes as to the result of my future studies and saw me in imagination a country doctor sent for by all the villagers for miles around, handsome fees pouring into his pockets; in fact, in time a rich man. In one word, the learning displayed by her first husband was always present to her mind, and she eagerly sought in me all the qualities and talents he had possessed.

Had it depended upon my mother I should have started for St. Georghen at once, so as to be able to begin my studies at the Latin school in October as soon as the term commenced. But it was finally decided that I was to stay at home till I had passed from childhood to youth, which takes place in

Jewish families at the age of thirteen and is celebrated by the Feast of Bar Mitzva. So I stayed on, and by degrees got used to the idea of having to leave home for good in a short time.

On the occasion of this Feast of Bar Mitzva the youth who is to enter the ranks of the Orthodox Jews must hold a public discourse on some religious subject, and is admitted to the reading of the Thora in the synagogue, and this symbolical feast, which marks the period at which he leaves childhood behind him and enters youth, is very beautiful. An entertainment is given, to which all his friends of the same age are invited; in the centre of the table is a large basket made of a kind of baked dough; this is filled with rods made of pastry, which are distributed at dessert amongst the boys and eaten by them as a sign that they will not be needed for the future.

My mother shed tears of joy at this feast, and during my discourse she imagined she heard my father speaking, and more than once sobbed out, "He is sure to be happy, for his father is praying for him in Paradise."

Strange to say, the whole ceremony made little impression on me. My one desire was to give my mother pleasure and win the admiration of my hearers; but the religious part of the ceremony did not interest me much, for the influence which the orthodox Jewish faith had on me as a child had diminished through my having read German books.

I was not yet a sceptic, but the fear of overstepping the ritual laws had disappeared. Pork and Christian food no longer seemed poison to me, and with the gradual breaking away of the barriers the sanctuary of my faith was more exposed to the outward attacks made upon it. The first attack shook it without destroying it entirely; my peace of mind was hardly disturbed; not, for instance, like Renan's, who, in his twentieth year, rushed into the cell of his friend at midnight, exclaiming, "Oh, I have become a doubter!"

There is only a short path from exaggerated fanaticism to scepticism. A few days after the feast my knapsack was packed—a very small knapsack, containing a few clothes and some books—and at dusk I left Duna Szerdahely, my crutch under my arm and accompanied by my mother. We hoped to be lucky enough to fall in with some carter taking corn to the weekly market at Presburg who would give us a lift in return for a drink or perhaps even from charity. And we were not mistaken, for we were soon overtaken by some carts, but as they were heavily laden with sacks of corn and the road was bad, we were given seats in two different carts. Although my mother placed me as comfortably as possible among the sacks and begged the man walking beside the cart to look after me, I heard her call to me several times during the night to hold on tightly so as not to fall out. Thus I arrived one fresh autumn morning at

the toll-gate of Presburg, and spent a few days in the town, during which time I did not cease to admire the one-storied houses with their many windows.

We continued our journey to St. Georghen in a cart drawn by four oxen, which we happened to meet on the way. This unostentatious entry into the pretty little town at the foot of one of the spurs of the Carpathians was a fitting beginning for the poverty-stricken existence I was destined to lead there.

Our first visit was to a certain Hirsh-Tirnau, a man noted for his piety and a school friend of my father, who, for the sake of his dead friend, agreed to give me a lodging gratis, though not as willingly as he might have done, for he would much rather have had me study the Talmud than devote myself to Christian studies. As for my lodging, I had permission to spread my mattress of straw in some part of the house at night, and a pillow and blanket were given me by charitable people. But, after all, it was something to have a place to sleep in and a roof over my head, and as soon as my mother was satisfied on this score she went with me to the Director of the Piarists' (Friars) College and entered my name in the list of those who were to study in the first Latin class, or the Parva, as they called it.

Nearly half the money I had earned in Nyék had to be deposited here as entrance fee; with the

other half I had to buy the necessary school-books, and thus I was left without a penny in my pocket, though the question of my board had not yet been touched upon.

It was the business of the Jewish commune to arrange for the daily midday meal for students of the Talmud, and this they did. Charitable, but mostly poor people offered me one meal a week at their table, and on Saturdays I was the official guest of the Jewish commune. The cashier gave me an assignment (or Bolette) on one of the richer members. This I had to present on Fridays to the lady of the house, and it was often an unpleasant surprise to her. By this means I got a better meal, which, however, I ate with the bitter feeling that I was an unwelcome guest.

It was a different thing in the case of the other meals; they were given freely, were the result of human kindness, or bestowed in memory of my dead father, and tasted better to me in consequence. This manner of getting my meals had its comical side too, for it often happened that I ate the same dish all the week according as it was the dish of the day at the various houses I visited. But I had at least enough to eat, had even a piece of bread given me sometimes for my supper, and as long as I did not lose the favour of one or other of my patrons I was better off even than at home as far as my board went.

The custom of "boarding," which was willingly

carried out by even the poorest Jews, speaks well for the charity of that community on the one hand, and on the other for their desire to assist and encourage poor students in their pursuit of knowledge. The poor, deserted, and much-oppressed Jew was always glad to share his hardly-earned crust of bread with those who thirsted for knowledge, and it certainly is a splendid trait of real humanity and of a noble endeavour to help in the intellectual struggle.

Being provided with board and lodging, I could now give my undivided attention to my studies in the Parva. My mother, whom it had cost a great effort to part from me, had given me much good advice as to my behaviour when left alone among strangers. She gave me a few pence for pocket-money and a bag of meal, from which I was to make my soup for breakfast in the morning, and after embracing me warmly several times she left me.

This second separation was not as hard as the first one ; habit makes everything easy in time, and when, having made friends with my comrades, I even took delight in going to school, I was able to overcome and forget the adversities of my daily life, and real childlike mirth and gaiety caused the first year of my school life to pass very pleasantly.

There could be no question of over-exertion for me, who had already learnt by heart and translated whole volumes of Hebrew. The elements of Latin grammar, delivered, strange to say, in the Latin

tongue, the rudiments of history, geography, and a little arithmetic were the branches of knowledge with which I was made familiar at the college conducted by the Piarists at St. Georghen. The greatest stress was laid upon the acquirement of the Latin tongue, in which we were obliged to carry on our general conversation after two months' time, and any one heard speaking his mother-tongue at school, whether Hungarian, German, or Slav, was condemned to write out the auxiliary verb "*sum, es, est,*" or some theme ten to twenty times, and to hand it in as a pensum. In order to control this, there was a regular system of spying at school; one of the scholars carried the so-called "*Liber asini*" (donkey's book) hidden on his person, and as *agent provocateur* began to speak in his mother-tongue, and if any one answered him in the same he whipped out the book, exclaiming: "*Inscribas, amice!*" ("Inscribe your name, my friend"); he left the delinquent no peace until he had entered his name, and a suitable punishment was meted out to him the following Saturday. This practice was a remnant of the Middle Ages, and formed a part of the severe *régime* of monastic life in vogue at that time in the Hungarian monasteries. A lively contrast to the spirit of national education which crept in later, it seems strange to us to-day, when the Hungarian language is rightly cultivated as the acknowledged language of the State. Just as severely was Catholic eccle-

siastical discipline kept up in many respects. Lutherans, Calvinists and Jews were obliged to repeat the "Veni Sancte Spiritus reple tuorum corda fidelium!" ("Come, Holy Ghost, fill the hearts of Thy faithful"), and also the "Our Father" and the "Hail Mary"; we were not allowed to quit the room whilst the lesson in catechism was going on, nor were we permitted to bring meat to school on Fridays; in fact, there was a sort of silent pressure exercised on the scholars in the hope of their embracing the Catholic religion—a pressure exercised without result, it is true, but it had a strange effect on me, who had been an Orthodox Jew, and would not for the world have pronounced the word "cross."

My teacher, a Piarist of twenty, Father Siebenlist by name, a man of prepossessing exterior and great kindness of heart, seemed to take a fancy to me from the beginning. He often pinched my cheek in a friendly way, sometimes gave me an apple, and when, in the depth of winter, I appeared at school with insufficient clothing, he called me up to his room, gave me a warm comforter, a waistcoat, and once even a pair of old trousers; in fact, he did what he could for me in every respect, moved, I am sure, by pure benevolence.

I certainly always did my duty at school as far as was in my power. I was considered the second best scholar, but could not attain to the position of primus, for the simple reason that I studied

one subject less than the others, namely, catechism.

At the examination at the end of the first term I succeeded in gaining the approval of my teachers and of the visitors who were present; the praise I earned was sweet to my youthful vanity, but while all my companions were able to distinguish themselves in the presence of their parents and relations, it was hard to have no one to share my pleasure.

But this bitter feeling of desertion had all the more effect on my ambition, and when, in the second term, I was the only scholar who received for his pensum (a translation from Hungarian into Latin) the classification "sine," that is *without* fault, I began to see what my mother meant when she spoke of "the inheritance of my father," and it was no wonder I took pleasure in forming hazy pictures of my future.

When I ask myself to-day why, in spite of my bodily misery, I felt the spur of ambition, and studied with such diligence, I find that the real reason is to be found, not so much in a disposition favoured by nature, as in my poverty and forlornness. I had no hope of help or protection from any side, the possibility of better times in the future depended entirely on my industry and activity, and that is why I worked so hard.

Though fortune had smiled on me at the beginning of my student's life, it was less kind to me later in the matter of daily existence, and it seemed

as though I were to be strengthened in my youth by means of hard struggle for the even harder struggle I was to go through in the future.

On account of my worldly, or rather Christian, studies, I soon lost the favour of my orthodox Jewish friend who had let me lodge in his house, and I had to look for another lodging, without having a penny in my pocket. It was the same with my meals, and for similar reasons I was reduced to five meals a week, later even to four. Jewish charity was not compatible with Christian education, and only amongst the more enlightened of the Orthodox Jews—the mere idea of neologism was then almost unknown—did real humanity and pity for the starving boy gain the upper hand. It may, in some cases, have been the result of the altered circumstances of my kind but mostly poor benefactors, since they needed every mouthful of food they had for their own increasing families. In any case, I soon began to suffer the pangs of hunger; the strict diet I was obliged to keep to, only stimulated my already healthy appetite, and my feelings as I sat in a corner of the courtyard, learning my lessons while other boys of my age were dining at their parents' tables, are indescribable. I feasted with my eyes, and felt as though I could have disposed of the contents of a baker's shop. The hungry-looking eyes of a healthy boy, full of life, speak the most eloquent language in the world. Later on, in my adventur-

ous life, I often came face to face with the dreadful monster called "hunger." His horrible, grinning features have impressed themselves indelibly in my memory, for hunger caused me to suffer equal pangs in my miserable lodging in the large town, or among the sand-hills of the steppes of Central Asia.

I found another lodging with a childless couple; the man was a cap-maker, and as his wife wished to have some one to talk to in her free hours, her choice fell upon me; for even then, in spite of all my privations and struggles, I was known for my lively manner and untiring loquacity.

As the lodging of this worthy couple consisted of one room only, I was given a corner in the kitchen, where I was allowed to spread my straw mattress every night; during the day I was either at school or in the court, and in the middle of the day, when there was no school, I either wandered about in the streets or sat in a corner of our court reading or learning my lessons.

For a time false pride had gained the day over hunger, and the pieces of bread I received from my schoolfellows in return for helping them with their lessons replaced the mid-day meal; but when they noticed that the colour was gradually leaving my cheeks, and that my liveliness decreased, their hearts were touched, and I was invited to dinner, sometimes by one, sometimes by another; so that, at the end of the term, my position as *protégé* of

the school was assured, and as second in the class I had gained the love of my schoolmates.

Two of them were specially kind to me in those days. One was a Herr von Vaymár, later on a distinguished lawyer in Tirnau; the other a Herr Hieronymi, later Hungarian Minister of Commerce, who recognised me thirty-five years afterwards in the house of the Director of the National Museum, Von Pulszky, and was agreeably surprised at the metamorphosis that had taken place in his former *protégé*.

Now came the delightful holidays, and with them the time for my return home. The son of a well-to-do peasant from the neighbourhood of Szerdahely gave me a lift in his cart, and it is impossible to describe the delightful feeling with which I crossed the threshold of my parent's door, bearing my certificate, on which my name was written in large golden letters, and showed this first triumphal result of my work to my mother.

My heart understood the meaning of her warm maternal kisses and of the hot tears she shed. Friendly neighbours had managed to explain to her the meaning of the words "classification" and "eminent" in my certificate; without being able to read them, she stared at my name, written in large letters, and kept remarking, "Of course it is quite natural, for my son Arminius has his dead father's brains, and I am quite sure he will be a success."

These were the happiest moments of my youth.

The delightful "Home, Sweet Home," the comfortable feeling of being with friends, and the knowledge that, for a time at least, I was free from the horrible spectre of hunger, did me a great deal of good. Unfortunately these two months fled like a midsummer night's dream, and when, at the beginning of autumn, I started for St. Georghen, my well-mended clothes in my knapsack, and a few pence in my pocket, the earnest side of life, with all its struggles, was again before me. I bravely tore myself away from my mother's embrace, and so, getting a lift now and then, and walking the rest of the way, I arrived the second time at St. Georghen.

I was now to be in the second class, or Secunda, and rise a step in my student's life. The worries and troubles as to board and lodging, and the acquisition of the necessary books had recommenced, and caused me more than once to blush with shame, and in spite of all my self-denial I was unable to procure all I needed.

Unfortunately my new professor in the second class was not so kindly disposed towards me as the dark-haired young priest in the first class had been, and when I went to enter my name in the list, I was received with the not very flattering remark, "Well, Moshele" (the name given to the Jews in general), "why dost thou study? Would it not be better for thee to become a 'kosher' butcher?" In spite of these remarks, which were more malicious

than witty, I found it desirable to show my last year's certificate, and to beg him to be kind to me and protect me. This he promised, smiling, but all the same, during the whole school-year, he not only mocked and scoffed at me, but in spite of my diligence, always kept me back in the class, and very often earnestly advised me not to continue my studies. He was certainly a splendid specimen of a professor whose business it was to guide the youthful mind through the halls of knowledge, humanity, and enlightenment.

But unfortunately this was the prevailing tone among the priests who were entrusted with the school teaching, and roughness and fanaticism flourished undisturbed in the shadow of semi-education. Exceptions were very rare, and from his earliest childhood the Jewish boy of that period received the saddest impressions of the position he was to fill in the future.

The real Magyars, the ruling element in the country, more chivalrously inclined and of marked indifference to religious affairs, have always shown themselves kinder and more tolerant to Jews; but all the more disgraceful was the behaviour of the Slavs, and in spite of my reputation as a good scholar, I was often exposed to the wanton behaviour of passing Christians in the streets of St. Georghen, had stones thrown at me, and was greeted with the insulting "Shide Makhele! Hep! Hep! Hep!" and other similar titles.

The second year at St. Georghen was anything but agreeable, and was full of privations of every kind. Only once or twice a week did I have sufficient to eat, and oh, the bitterly cold nights in the kitchen of the cap-maker, with only a miserable counterpane as covering! When my misery was at its height I received, through the kindness of my last year's teacher, the employment of "boots" in the monastery, where I had to make my appearance early in the morning, in order to clean the boots placed outside the doors of three professors, and sometimes to brush their clothes. I performed this office in the corridor, by the light of the fire blazing in the stove, which not only warmed me but gave me sufficient light to learn my lessons by, and so I always managed to appear at school with my lessons well prepared. And when I was able to still my hunger with a piece of bread or some potatoes, I was the liveliest amongst my comrades, and was even able at times to move my surly professor to a smile.

My sojourn in St. Georghen gave me the first proof of how much youth can bear. Hunger, cold, mockery, and insult, I experienced them all in turn; but the greatest misery was not capable of darkening the serene sky of youthful mirth for more than a few minutes, and even my healthy colour returned after a short interval of bodily collapse.

Although I had only just completed my fourteenth year, I had made many plans for the future,

and built many castles in the air. While other scholars spent their time in games and in sport, I had always indulged in the delight of reading books about travel, heroic deeds, and simply-written historical works, and a book was to me not only a friend and comforter in trouble, but it even drove away hunger; for the fire of my excited fancy nourished not only my mind but my body too, and occupied my senses to such an extent that I often forgot both hunger and sleep.

Extraordinary was the change that took place in me as far as religion was concerned. There was, of course, not a trace of the excessive ardour of Jewish orthodoxy left. Fringes and phylacteries had long been done away with; the law as to ritual food seemed to me childish and ridiculous, and I had been prevented touching pork only by my aversion to the unaccustomed taste. The glimpse I had already had into the various religions, the acquaintance gradually gained with the causes of certain natural phenomena, which superstition had formerly interpreted quite differently, and, lastly, the vast difference I found between principle and action in my Catholic teachers, had nearly upset all my beliefs; they trembled on their bases.

Of a complete want of religious feeling or of conversion to another faith there could be no question, but in the ladder that was to lead me to heaven many rungs were broken, some even

missing entirely, and in the midst of the hard struggle for life I had neither time nor inclination to soar to the higher regions of metaphysical contemplation.

It was chiefly my experiences during the time I spent in service in the monastery of the Piarists in St. Georghen which stimulated my indifference in religious matters. The contrast between the way of speaking and of acting of these ecclesiastics was often very marked. They did not seem so very particular as to religious observances, and when one morning the student who had been ordered to serve at the early Mass did not appear on the scene, I had to put on the cassock and serve as though I had been one of the regular acolytes. I knew the catechism by heart, they said, and was quite like a Catholic: there was no need to make any difficulty about it. I enjoyed the comedy very much, and this and similar experiences were a good preparation for my future *rôle* of Mohammedan priest. It was towards the end of the second year that the idea of leaving St. Georghen for the larger provincial town of Presburg, in the same neighbourhood, took firmer root in my mind; I hoped to find more opportunities for study there and better means of livelihood. When I thought of the sufferings and deprivations I had gone through in St. Georghen at the beginning of my stay there, it was not hard for me to take up my staff and seek my fortune elsewhere. Only the

thought that my father's grave was in the churchyard of St. Georghen made me waver, for many a time had I gone out there in moments of bitterness and wept away my trouble on the grave. And now I was to leave it.

It was during one of these visits that I resolved to do away with the crutch I had till then carried under my left arm, and which not only gave rise to many satirical remarks among my schoolfellows, but also wore out my coat-sleeve. In a fit of vanity I broke the crutch over my father's gravestone, and with a heavy heart and slow, laborious steps I returned to the town, hopping most of the way on one foot. At first it was very hard to walk, but being now in my fifteenth year I was much stronger, and, aided by my vanity, and with the help of a stick, I was soon able to overcome all difficulties.

I limped more than I had done, but at least I was rid of my crutch, and I soon left St. Georghen with my knapsack (no heavy burden) and my certificate containing the classification "Eminent." By my mother's advice I was not to spend the next holidays at home but with her relatives in Moravia, in the town of Lundenburg. The place of my destination seemed further off than did later the most distant parts of inner Asia. I had arrived in Presburg, the famous old coronation town, without a penny in my pocket. After having wandered about helplessly in the streets, and

gazed my fill at the high houses all around me, and having had a good meal at the expense of an acquaintance from Szerdahely, whom I met by chance in the town, my attention was attracted by a cart which was just being laden preparatory to starting for Vienna. I was told that the cart belonged to a hackney-coachman of the name of Alexander, a rough but good-natured man, who would perhaps take me with him to Vienna for nothing, if I could manage to gain his heart.

Trembling, I proffered my request, and having inspected me from head to foot, he said there was no more room on the box, but if I could make myself comfortable in the basket of hay strapped on to the back of the conveyance, he had no objection to taking me with him. In a minute I had climbed into the basket, and making myself comfortable in the soft hay, I started for the imperial town of Vienna, undisturbed by the jerks of the rumbling vehicle.

Arrived in Vienna, I had first to look up a relative, from whom I hoped to receive the necessary sum to take me to Lundenburg, for in 1845 there was already a railway between Vienna and that town.

Mr. G., a well-to-do calico manufacturer, received me very kindly, kept me in his house for two days, and gave me money for a third-class ticket, besides a few pence for travelling necessaries. Quite delighted, I started for the Nordbahn. I

was to travel by rail for the first time, and intending to provide myself with plenty of food for the journey, I bought a quantity of fruit and various dainties, especially my favourite kind of confectionery, the so-called butter-cake.

But on arriving at the ticket-office I found, to my horror, that I had spent too much; had, in fact, bought ten or fifteen butter-cakes more than I should have done. As the Arabic proverb says, "The stomach is the origin of all troubles," and here was I in a sorry plight! What was to be done? With a disturbed countenance I told the clerk at the ticket-office of the plight I was in. He laughed, and advised me to ask in Latin for the missing sum from some gentlemen who were standing in a corner of the hall. As it was nearly time to start, I picked up courage and approached the group of gentlemen, saying in everyday Latin: "Domini spectabiles, rogo humillime, dignemini mihi dare aliquantos cruciferos qui iter ferrarium solvendi mihi carent" ("Honoured gentlemen, would you give me a few pence, as I have not enough to pay for my railway ticket?"). This Latin speech from a small, lame boy, such as I was, had its effect, and they soon collected about two shillings for me. So I took my ticket, and hopping gaily through the waiting-room, got into a compartment of the train for Lundenburg.

Those who know anything of the bond which draws Jewish families together, will not be as-

tonished that my uncle, David Malavan, received the son of his sister, who had emigrated to Hungary years before, with open arms, and that my other relatives were kindness itself, and did all they could to make my holidays pleasant for me. They gave me a new suit of clothes and a few florins to take me home again, and I started just before the term began, travelling by Vienna to Presburg.

It was not long before I discovered that it was to be my fate in the old Hungarian coronation town to lead a life of martyrdom. I was never very much attracted by large towns; the narrow horizon, enclosed between two rows of high houses, and the hard pavement seemed to me to be in keeping with the narrow-mindedness and hardness of heart of the inhabitants, and the more I missed the blue sky the sadder I became inwardly. After many useless wanderings I came to the conclusion that there could be no question here of a free lodging, and was very glad when a certain Mr. Lövy, whose son had failed in his examination in the second class, offered me shelter in return for helping his son with his lessons. True it was only half of a folding-bed, which by day was pushed behind a bench, but I accepted it with delight.

As far as my board was concerned, I was destined by fate to go through all the torments of Tantalus. Mr. Lövy had a cookshop, and soon after midday the one room in our small lodging began to fill with poor students and tailors' journeymen, to whom, for

the modest sum of threepence, a meal was served, consisting of soup, meat, and vegetables, not in very large quantities, it is true, and showing very primitive culinary skill, but all the same sufficient to satisfy the heroes of the thimble and the doctors-to-be. Custom there was plenty, and there would have been even more had not Mr. Lövy made a rule that any one failing to pay three times was not to enter the house again. Strangers, the length of whose purse was as yet unknown, could easily indulge in the luxury of *one* dinner, but my destitute state was well known to my landlord, and so I had no credit even for a single meal. The state of my feelings as I sat at dinner-time in a corner of the room, trying in vain to keep my eyes fixed on my book, and feeling all the gnawing pains of hunger, may well be imagined, and now and then I could not help stealing a glance at the students and tailors as they sat at table enjoying their meal.

This eager, hungry look of a starving lad seemed sometimes to appeal to them, for now and then one or other of them would make a sign to me to finish the vegetables he had left, or some one pressed a piece of bread into my hand ; so that I generally managed to get a trifle to still the worst pangs of hunger, and partly to satisfy the inner man, which had already caused me so much trouble in my short life.

The reader will see from this that my position in Presburg was not of the most brilliant. In

school matters I was not much better off. I was to study in the third class at the college of the Benedictine monks, and when I went to Father Aloysius Pendl to enter my name in the list, his fat reverence received me with the following words, "Well, Harshl, so you want to be a doctor, do you?" The fact that I had formerly been dubbed "Moshele," and now "Harshl," did not vex me in the least, but it was unpleasant as proving what treatment I had to expect in the future; and the three years I went to the college under the archway in Presburg will never be forgotten by me, recalling as they do endless instances of stupid priestly animosity and disgraceful intolerance.

Later on in life I again met that amiable director, Father *Pendl*, who ought to have been used as a *pendulum* on a village church spire, rather than have been placed at the head of a college. Our second meeting was under quite different circumstances. I was then an honoured traveller in the Monastery of Martinsberg, and although he did not remember me, I have never forgotten him. Unfortunately the personality of the teacher is not without influence on the subjects he teaches, and in the third class, and even more in the fourth, I found that my desire for study was rapidly decreasing, and that my visits to school partook more and more of the nature of forced labour, so that I was happiest when I was able, after having learnt my lessons, to read or study for my own pleasure, that is, when I could occupy my

youthful mind in my own way, without control from others.

The ease with which I made use of the Latin tongue for general conversation, and also the fact that when I began my studies I knew four languages —Hungarian, German, Slav, and Hebrew—was the reason I turned my attention to the acquirement of other languages. I had heard that a knowledge of French was necessary in order to be considered *bon ton*, and that without it no one could pretend to any education worth speaking of. So I decided to learn the language at once, and bought a small grammar by a certain La Fosse, which possessed the advantage of giving the pronunciation of the words in German transcription, thus making the help of a teacher unnecessary. It was, of course, a miserable pronunciation, but I worked my way through the book the best way I could, and, as with the help of the Latin I knew, I was soon able to understand books written in a simple style, I was, after a few weeks' time, full of hope that I should soon be able to speak French.

When alone I used to make up sentences or carry on a conversation with myself, or read the most trivial things, declaiming them with great pathos; and in the space of a few months I had learnt so much that I had (especially in the lower class I was in) acquired a reputation for a much greater knowledge of French than I really had. Whether it was my own deceptive self-conscious-

ness supported by the ignorance of those whom I associated with, or my natural talent for languages which was then beginning to show itself, I do not know; certain it is that I conversed in French without restraint, and by my volubility surprised not only myself but all who heard me. It developed to such a mania with me, that I addressed every one in French—peasants, tradespeople, merchants, Slavs, Germans, and Hungarians, it was all the same to me, and great was my delight if they stared at me and admired me for my learning (?). Such juvenile tricks were the only amusement I had in my otherwise very hard life. In every other respect I was excessively badly off, and there is not a stone in the little town on the Danube that could not tell pitiable tales of my extreme misery and suffering.

As long as I had half of the folding-bed at Mr. Lövy's I was at least sure of a shelter, and had only to fight against hunger. But one evening I had for a bedfellow a young man, just arrived from a foreign country, and from him I caught an illness which showed itself after some days in constant irritation of the skin, and in consequence of which I was immediately sent away by Mr. Lövy. As I owed that good man a few pence he retained all my personal effects as payment of the debt; so one dull autumn evening I left the house with my school-books under my arm, and wandered about in the streets, not daring to apply for shelter for

fear of being turned out again on account of my disease.

It was nine o'clock, when, quite exhausted by hunger and fatigue, I sank down on a bench in the Promenade. My glance fell upon the windows of the one-storied houses opposite; I saw children at table having supper, while farther on there were others playing games and running and jumping about. I heard a piano being played, thought of home and my mother, and, seized with a feeling of unutterable loneliness, I began to cry bitterly.

Having put my boots under my head for a pillow, I had just lain down on the bench to try to sleep, when I heard the tramp of regular footsteps approaching from a distance.

"That is the watchman," I thought, "going his nightly round."

Trembling with the fear of being discovered and taken up as a vagabond, to spend the night in a cell, I crept under the bench and hid there until the watchman, wrapped in his long cloak, had passed on. He did not notice me, and thus I was saved from the shame of spending a night in prison.

Of course there was no further possibility of sleep that night, and with an anxious heart I peered out from under the bench. The lights in the windows were extinguished one by one, the watchman passed several times, but not very near to me, and I lay there, cowering under the bench the whole of that

cold autumn night, till the break of day. I went to school that day, but gave notice that I was ill, and it was only after a fortnight's sojourn in the hospital of the Friars of Mercy that, once more in good health and much stronger, I was able to start again on my thorny way.

After this sad interval my natural liveliness soon returned. I finished the third and fourth classes in Presburg at the Benedictine College the best way I could, but I took far more interest in the progress I was making in my private studies than in satisfying my professors. This certainly had no good result, for I had begun to study alone, without first acquiring the solid foundation of a college education; but on the other hand it spurred me on to greater industry and perseverance, as, being free from all control, I was master and pupil in one person.

Like all autodidacts, I had greatly overrated the results of my work, paying no attention whatever to the difference between reading a thing superficially and learning it thoroughly. The consequence was I fell into faults that I have never been able to eradicate. But I learned with delight and diligence, and being hardened by constant struggles against Fate, questions of material comfort ceased to trouble me much.

As my circle of acquaintances widened, it was easier for me to gain my living by teaching. I found shelter with an old bachelor, a usurer,

whose lodging consisted of a single room and a tiny ante-room where I slept, with the usurer's coat for my covering. This shameful old Harpagon begrudged me even the crumbs he left, although I filled the office of man-servant and watch-dog for him; but he was mistaken in thinking me of much use in the latter capacity, for were I once asleep, a thief, in fact a whole regiment of thieves, could have rushed over my prostrate body without awakening me. Oh! golden hours of youth! With what pleasure I dwell on them to-day, when in my soft, comfortable bed I have difficulty in stealing a few hours of sleep from friend Morpheus! In spite of every comfort and convenience I cannot to-day attain to what I could when I went to bed hungry and slept on the hard, bare boards.

As far as boarding went I was better off just then, for my fame as a teacher had spread in the lower classes of Jewish society, and it was chiefly to cooks and housemaids I gave lessons in reading and writing. In some cases where I had inspired great confidence I was employed to write billets-doux, and in return for this service of love I received a good meal, sometimes even dainties.

I always found that cooks were the persons who most indulged in love-letters; each one seemed to have been crossed in love, and whether its flame was fanned by proximity to the fire or by other unknown reasons, certain it is that the ladies who practised the culinary art were my best customers,

and if I was able to commit to paper a sigh, a longing look, a greeting sweet as sugar, or even a kiss, I was sure of a rich reward, and could reckon on a good dinner or supper for days to come.

From cooks and housemaids my reputation spread to the young ladies, or rather to the lady of the house. One evening at the request of a cook who was head over ears in love with her boot-maker, I sang the well-known German song—

"Schöne Minka, ich muss scheiden,
Ach, du fühlest nicht die Leiden!"

("Lovely Minka, I must leave you,
Ah! you cannot guess my sorrow!")

to the accompaniment of a guitar. My sonorous voice (I had, of course, no idea of singing) seems to have penetrated to the sitting-room, and made a favourable impression, for the attention of the lady of the house and her daughters was attracted; I was called into the room, made to sing some songs, and when the lady smoothed my curls and praised my voice and my hair, I became aware that I had stumbled upon a *gradus ad Parnassum*, and that I was in for a good time.

I was not engaged in the house itself, for the aristocratic feelings of plutocracy revolted against the idea of employing the cook's teacher. But I was recommended to others, and was soon introduced into the Jewish society of Presburg (the lines between which and Christian circles were very

distinctly defined in those days) as private teacher of Hungarian, French, and Latin.

The sum received for these lessons was, of course, in proportion to the age and position of the teacher, very modest, sometimes not exceeding two florins a month, which worked out at about one penny an hour. But when my teaching was attended with great success my salary was raised, and thus I was enabled, by dint of devoting three hours a day to teaching, to live pretty comfortably, for things were cheap in Presburg in those days. I was at all events freed from my greatest care, the question of daily bread, and was even able now and then to buy some article of second-hand clothing; and oh! how proud I was when I bought with my own hard-earned money a tolerably threadbare coat or pair of trousers!

Unfortunately my success had its bad effects, for after spending eight hours a day at school and three or four in teaching, there was little time left for my private studies. Besides, even this small success awoke in me a desire for the pleasures of life, such as a visit to the theatre now and then, or a piece of cake; and I was in danger of losing my zeal in the pursuit of higher aims.

In spite of all I had gone through I was childish and frivolous enough to allow my head to be turned by the watery ray of sunshine that Fate had sent me. The knowledge that I was now well fed and

tolerably well clothed would have made me presumptuous had not Divine Providence sent me a timely warning and roused me from my lethargy.

This warning was conveyed by the War of Independence of 1848, which had just broken out. At the first approach of the storm the schools were closed and lectures discontinued. Commerce was stopped, and every one was anxious as to the result of the storm that was breaking over their heads. To make matters worse, the mob in Presburg began a regular persecution of the Jews, plundering the ghetto, breaking into houses and shops, and destroying hundreds of barrels of wine and spirits in the cellars.

The maddened and drunken mob then stormed through the Judengasse, on to the Wödritz, and round the Zuckermandl, and the cries and wailings of the persecuted Jews rang in every one's ears for some time after. Thus the busy little colony was cast into poverty and despair.

I was rudely waked from the enjoyment of my imaginary good fortune; but my chief feeling was one of disgust at the horrible executions of Hungarian patriots, stigmatised as rebels, which I, in my youthful curiosity, attended on the so-called Eselsberg, behind the fortress. Two of these bloody scenes especially took deep root in my memory. One was the execution of Baron Mednyanszky, the commander of the little fortress of Leopoldstadt, taken by the Austrians, and of his

adjutant, by name Gruber. Both were young, and, laughing and talking, they walked arm-in-arm to the scaffold. When I saw how those constables of the Camarilla treated the corpses of these martyrs for freedom, swinging them by the feet as they hung on the gallows, I was overcome by a strange feeling of revenge. I called the Slav soldiers several opprobrious names, and it would have gone hard with me had I not hurried away.

The second awful picture I have in my mind's eye is another execution I witnessed on the same spot, namely, that of a Lutheran clergyman called Razga, who was condemned to be hanged for preaching a sermon of Hungarian national tendency. This noble man was accompanied from his prison to the place of execution by his wife and children. Embracing and comforting his dear ones, he walked to the gallows with a firm step, and when the Profos had read the sentence and broken the staves, the heroic churchman kissed each member of his family, and gave himself into the hands of his executioners. Mother and children (I do not know how many there were) knelt on the ground near to the scaffold, their sorrowful gaze fixed on the condemned husband and father, and several of them fainted, overcome by sorrow.

This scene brought tears to the eyes even of the soldiers, and the reader may imagine what an impression it left on a sentimental youth like me.

The present generation of Hungarians has, for

political reasons, drawn a veil over this and other dreadful scenes; but it can only partially cover them, for those who were present will always remember them with a shudder.

My further residence in Presburg had become impossible, and I began to look about for an engagement in the country. I accepted the offer of a poor Jew in the village of Marienthal, near Presburg, to spend some months in his house in the capacity of family preceptor. There, in a quiet valley of the Carpathians, I could once more devote myself to my private studies, and when I returned to town with my modest earnings in my pocket, I decided not to enter the sixth class at the Benedictine college, but at the Protestant Lyceum, as the professors there were known to be unprejudiced, humane, and intelligent men, and I was heartily tired of the everlasting drudgery for the fanatic monks.

At the Lyceum the language spoken was mostly German, and the lectures were better in every way, so that I might have got on very well there had not my difficulties in procuring the necessaries of life recommenced, and partly withdrawn my attention from my studies. At that time I was eighteen years old, and weary of my eight years' struggle with all the moods of Fate. My spirit was so broken that I decided to pause in my studies for a year, and take an engagement as tutor in a country family, and then, having earned the necessary means, return to town and take up the thread of my studies again.

The Private Tutor

CHAPTER III

THE PRIVATE TUTOR

"DOCENDO DISCIMUS" ("by teaching we learn") says the Latin proverb, and according to this I must have had the very best opportunities for acquiring those scientific accomplishments necessary to the attainment of the object I had in view. Nevertheless it was with a heavy heart that I left the school, where I ought to have remained to finish the regular course of my studies, and went out into the world as —*a wild student*, without discipline, without system, without even the supervision which my age and inexperience demanded. Being on a visit to my uncle at Zsámbokrét, in the county of Neutra, I first made the acquaintance of Mr. von Petrikovich, a small landowner and postmaster. He was a clever, unprejudiced, and worthy man, who had had his eye on me for some time because of my readiness in foreign languages, and he now engaged me as tutor, or rather as teacher of languages, to his two sons. I was to receive full board and a salary of 150 florins, a very modest honorarium, but quite

in keeping with the very modest services which I was able to render. For, apart from my knowledge of Hungarian and Latin, my learning was very deficient, and as regards my office of prefect—such was my title—I was rather pupil than master. Mrs. von Petrikovich, a highly-accomplished woman, who had been brought up in very aristocratic surroundings, and thought a great deal of good behaviour, manners and dress, soon found to her grief that the prefect, in spite of his linguistic accomplishments, was a very unpolished individual, who could scarcely be expected to teach her sons drawing-room manners. She therefore undertook the difficult task of first educating the tutor, and the trouble the good lady took to instruct me on all possible points of etiquette, showing me how to handle my serviette, fork and knife at table, how to salute, walk, stand, and sit, was indeed a brilliant proof of her kind-heartedness. I became a totally different being during this, my first sojourn, in a gentleman's family, and I was so much in earnest that I spent whole hours over my toilet, and in practising bows, and the elegant movements of head and hands. I attended fairly well to my duties as tutor, but my own studies suffered considerably under the influence of this training. I became seriously inclined to vanity, and wasted not only my time before the looking-glass and in the drawing-room, but also my substance; and the few florins which I ought to have saved to recom-

mence my studies dwindled away so fast, that at the end of the year I had not even the sixteen florins left, which I owed to the Lutheran Lyceum at Presburg, and without which I could not get my certificate, or rather testimonial of merit. It was indeed unpardonable thoughtlessness which had thus led me into debt, an offence for which I had to suffer many sharp pricks of conscience, and which cost me dear. Was it because for the first time in my life I enjoyed the comfort of living free from care? Was it this that so enthralled my senses and captivated my whole being? Or was it the outcome of some hidden, frivolous trait in my character? I cannot account for it. All I know is that I felt very miserable when, in the autumn of 1851, I went to Pest with Mr. Petrikovich, this worthy man having taken his sons there to attend the public school. Thus I left the quiet haven of the Petrikovich's home, and found myself once more launched on the stormy sea of wretchedness and disappointment.

Pest, now Budapest, the beautiful, flourishing capital of the kingdom of Hungary, boasted at that time nothing of the pomp and grandeur which it now possesses, for the Austrian reign of terror which followed the struggle for independence had left its sorrowful mark upon the city and the people. After taking leave of Mr. Petrikovich, I turned into one of the less frequented back streets in search of inexpensive lodgings, *i.e.*, a bed, eventually half a

bed; and the same terrible despondency which had taken hold of me on my first arrival at Presburg came over me again in all its intensity. For half a day I wandered round without success; nobody would take me in without references and part payment in advance. At last I was reluctantly obliged to go to the house of a wealthy relative, who allowed me to remain with him for a few days, and then slipping two florins into my hand, he gave me the paternal advice to try and find something to do, as his wife objected to my presence there. I went straight to some of the coffee-houses to inquire from the tradespeople hanging about if they could help me to a position as teacher of languages. My timid and dejected appearance attracted the attention and called forth the sympathy, of a certain Mr. G. He began to talk to me, and the end of it was that he proposed I should enter his service as tutor to his children in return for board and lodging, to which, of course, I agreed at once. Alas for my studies! Mr. G. lived on the Herminenplatz, a good way from the college of the Piarists, which I wanted to attend. The grand-sounding word *quarter* (lodging) consisted of a bed in the servants' room, which I shared with the cook, the chambermaid, and one of the children, while the board was so extremely poor and scanty that the memory of the various meals of the day was rather in my thoughts than in my stomach. And yet for this meagre fare I had much to do and to

suffer. The untrained children were always worrying me, and when they had gone to bed and I tried to get on with some of my school preparations, or private studies, the cook and the chambermaid began to sing, or to quarrel, or to play tricks upon me, and made it absolutely impossible for me to do any work. In the long run this became unbearable, and hard though it was, I gave notice to leave. As I had not the public certificate, for which I could not pay the necessary sixteen florins to the Lyceum at Presburg, I had only been admitted to the Piarist school for three months as provisional student of the seventh class. For want of the said official certificate from the previously finished classes, I was compelled to leave the school, and I took the bold resolve to turn my back once and for all upon the town and public study, and to find a place in the country as private tutor.

I call this a bold resolve, but it was also a very painful one, for henceforth I had quitted for ever the road which was to lead me to a definite profession in life, and as I had devoted myself to the aimless study of foreign languages, I drifted into a road the end of which I did not know myself, and which I was certainly not led to follow by the faintest glimmer of future events. The danger of my position gradually became clear to me, for in the hard struggle of life, now lasting already for ten years, only the momentary deliverance from suffering and privation had been before my eyes, and

now again this one thought, this one care filled my mind: Will my plan succeed, shall I find a good place as private tutor? My fitness for the office consisted in the knowledge of a few languages, and a slight acquaintance with one or two more. I could read German, French, and Italian fairly well without the help of a dictionary; Hebrew and Latin I knew slightly, and of course I could speak and write my two native tongues, viz., Hungarian and Slav. On the strength of these accomplishments I had the audacity to advertise myself as professor of seven languages, and in my arrogance I even pretended to teach them all.

This was certainly a sufficiently striking sign-board and quite in keeping with the market where I hoped to dispose of my intellectual wares; for at best I could only expect to take a position in a homely Jewish family, who, with slight knowledge of philology and pædagogy, would be perfectly satisfied with my pretentious assertions. Far from wishing to act under false pretences, I tried to fulfil my office to the very best of my ability; I taught languages after the method by which I myself had learned them, viz., the so-called Jacotot method, and in most cases I had the satisfaction of seeing my pupils so well advanced in any one language within six months that they could read easy passages and also speak a little. I was equally successful in other branches of learning, such as history, geography, and arithmetic, so that

without claiming any pædagogic merit, but simply by honest effort and perseverance, I managed to fulfil my office as tutor fairly satisfactorily.

Not without some interest are the different ways and means by which I secured my appointments as private tutor, and for curiosity's sake, I will relate them here. Advertising in newspapers was at that time either not the custom in Hungary or of very little use; besides, for lack of the necessary means this method was quite closed to me. But there were professional agents or brokers, as they were commonly called, who undertook to provide teachers with situations, and also to find tutors for such country families as could afford the luxury of a private tutor. These were chiefly merchants or farmers living in the provinces, who came to Pest every year at the time of the two great general fairs, and after disposing of their goods—*i.e.*, after they had sold their wool, gall-nuts, corn, skins, &c., proceeded to make the necessary purchases for their house and farm. The domestic wants were supplied by the various stores, but to procure a tutor, a "kosher" butcher, or brandy distiller, there were certain coffee-houses—*i.e.*, places where the brokers in that particular line could be consulted, and the pædagogic strength at disposal inspected. As educational exchange, the Café Orczy, on the high-road of Pest, enjoyed in those days a special popularity. This dirty place, reeking with the smell of various kinds of tobacco—which even

now after forty years has for the most part preserved its old physiognomy—was then crowded with town and country Jews of all sorts and descriptions; some sipping their coffee, others talking and wildly gesticulating, others again bargaining and shouting, all making a deafening noise. In the afternoon, between two and four, the crush and the clatter were at their worst in this pædagogic exchange. At that time everybody of any importance was there, and on a bench at the side the eligible teachers were seated, anxiously watching the agent as he extricated himself from the crowd and with the purchaser, *i.e.*, the future principal, stood before the bench, reviewed the candidates and called up one or the other of them. It was always a most painful scene, of which I have since often been reminded when visiting the slave markets in the bazaars of Central Asia, and the remembrance of it even now makes me shudder whenever I pass the Café Orczy. With a heavy heart and deeply ashamed I used to sit there for hours many afternoons together, until at last Mr. Mayer (that was the name of my agent) came up to me accompanied by a son of Mercury engaged in agricultural pursuits, told me to rise, and, all the time expatiating upon my tremendous cleverness, introduced me to the farmer. Of course I had to support the zealous broker in the glorification of my own littleness—just as the slave has to prove his muscular strength in the bazaars of Central

Asia by the execution of his *tours de force*—and after the amount of the annual honorarium had been fixed and I had presented my references, the farmer paid me the earnest money, the greater portion of which was claimed by the broker for the trouble he had taken, while I with the shabby remainder had to cover the cost of my equipment, and eventually my travelling expenses.

This was the regular routine of business on such occasions, and both buyer and seller benefited by it. I have always been struck by the great desire for culture evinced even by the most illiterate Jewish merchant. He spares no pains and no trouble to give his children a better education than he himself enjoyed; for in spite of his strong materialistic tendencies he has higher ideals in his mind for the future of his children.

The first engagement I obtained in this manner was with Mr. Rosenberg, in Kutyevo, a village in Slavonia. He was the eldest son of the family, only a few years my senior, who had to do some business for his father at the St. Joseph fair, and amongst other things had also to find a teacher for his younger brothers and sisters. The young man had looked at me, somewhat abashed, but I began to talk to him in fluent French, of which he had some faint notion, and this had its effect; he took a liking to me, engaged me, and a few days later I went with him by steamer to Eszegg, and from there by carriage to the village of Kutyevo

in a charming valley of the Slavonic mountains. My reception at Mr. Rosenberg's house was just as unfortunate as when I first came to Nyék—that is to say, they thought I looked too young, that my cheeks were too red, and that with such attributes I should probably lack the dignity and gravity so indispensable to a teacher. The principal cause of this fear seems to have been Miss Emily, the eldest daughter of the house, a charming girl of sixteen, who also was to refresh herself at the fountain of my wisdom, and according to the mother's judgment the small difference in age between teacher and pupil might lead to grave consequences. As things turned out the good lady was not far wrong in this. Otherwise they were all very kind to me. I had a good room, excellent food, and as I had to teach only six hours a day, I had time enough to devote myself with all my might to philological studies. It was here that I first began to give my studies a definite direction, for after acquiring a so-called knowledge of several European languages I passed on to Turkish, and therewith turned my attention to Oriental studies. The consciousness of having missed the help of regular schooling, and the formal discharge in the ordinary course, caused me many pangs of conscience, for I knew it was all through my own unpardonable recklessness, namely, in neglecting twice over to save the sixteen florins wherewith to redeem the school certificate. I reproached myself most unmercifully, called myself a good-for-nothing,

and determined henceforth to work with unremitting zeal, to make use of every moment, and by increased diligence to redeem the past. In my excessive remorse I even went so far as to write in Turkish characters—so as not to be read by any one else—on my books, on my writing-table, on the walls of my room, such words as "Persevere!" "Be ashamed of yourself!" "Work!" These were to act as a stimulant and constant warning not to fall again into the same error.

I could the more easily keep this firm resolve to myself, as my linguistic studies had now carried me beyond the mere mechanical committing of passages to memory, and enabled me to enjoy the more intellectual pleasure of reading the classical works of foreign lands. This filled my leisure hours with exquisite delight. Was it the loneliness of village life which made work such a recreation to me, or was it the glorious feeling of being able to read these master-works of other nations in the original tongue? Enough, my pleasure in reading was unbounded; every thought seemed divine, every metaphor a veritable gem of poesy; and my reading, or more often reciting, was constantly interrupted by exclamations of surprise and admiration, and the margins of the various texts were covered with notes and comments expressive of my rapturous appreciation. The works which at that time especially took my fancy were: The *Seasons*, by Thomson; the *Henriade*, by Voltaire;

the *Sonnets* of Petrarch; and above all the *Gerusalemme Liberata* of Tasso. For hours together I could sit spellbound by the simple and beautiful account of the heroic deeds of love, or drink in with delight the exquisite description of the changing seasons. The noble battle before the walls of Jerusalem or the charming disquisitions of Thomson, all had the same magic charm for me. The precursors of awakening spring or the glories of an English summer landscape filled my cup of delight to the very brim, and the winter picture of the homely company gathered round the crackling cottage fire brought me into an equally enthusiastic frame of mind. When reading the *Henriade* I was particularly fascinated by the heroic figure of Henry IV.; while the Sonnets of Petrarch were the silent interpreters of my awakening passion for the daughter of the house, and I would gladly have substituted the name of Emily for that of Laura, if the rhythm and the Argus eye of "Mamma" had not prevented me. Tasso's immortal epic exercised a truly magic charm upon my youthful imagination. I liked best to read out of doors, far from all human sounds; it seemed to suit my imaginative fancy; and as long as the weather was fit my favourite spot used to be on a hill just outside the village, overshadowed by a large cherry-tree, and close to a gently murmuring stream. There in the early morning hours, and in the evenings between five and eight I used to while away my time in the

company of my favourite poets. There I repeated the sonnets of Petrarch, with my eyes fixed upon the house where Emily dwelt. There I recited my Tasso with wild enthusiasm, and it was there that one afternoon I was so absorbed in that wonderful passage where the poet compares the battle of the Saracens before Jerusalem to claps of thunder and flashes of lightning, that I had never noticed the gathering thunderstorm over my own head; I did not hear the peals of thunder and heeded not the lightning, until I was rudely awakened from my trance by the rain coming down in torrents, and wetting me to the skin. Often I was so oblivious of everything, that I held long discourses with birds or flowers or grass-blades, and never stopped until some passer-by interrupted the current of my thoughts. Thus it came about that at a very early age Mother Nature had become so dear to me; and a fine morning not only put me in good trim for the whole day, but for many days after. I always chose the most secluded spots for my favourite studies—places where I could be safe from sudden interruptions; and so, living in a world of flowery imagery, and burning with the fire of enthusiasm and fantasy, I began to build my airy castles for the future. To the seven languages I knew I had gradually added Spanish, Danish, and Swedish, all of which I learnt in a comparatively short time, sufficiently at any rate to appreciate the literary productions of these various countries. I revelled in the poetry of

Calderon, Garcilazo de la Vega, Andersen, Tégnér, and Atterbon, but at the same time I made steady progress in Turkish, for in my passion for learning, strengthened by an ever-growing power of retention, I had indeed accomplished wonders. Whenever in my readings I came upon words that I did not know the meaning of, I wrote them down and committed them to memory, at first from ten to twenty per day, but gradually I managed to learn as many as eighty or even a hundred, and to remember them also. With a determined will, a young man in the vigour of youth can do almost anything. True, I made many mistakes, and often had to unlearn again what I had learnt; many a time I found myself on the wrong track, but there was always satisfaction in the consciousness that I had not wasted my time, that I had not squandered the precious years of my youth. In this consciousness I boldly faced the future with all the disappointments which possibly might await me in the thorny path of life, whether owing to accident or to my own fault.

The happiness of my idyllic rest and careless existence in the beautiful valley of the Slavonic mountains came abruptly to an end; and after a sojourn of eighteen months in Kutyevo, my fair, smiling sky was once more darkened by gathering clouds. As teacher I had fulfilled my duty; as pedagogue Mr. Rosenfeld was satisfied with me, but as man, *i.e.*, young man, my conduct was con-

sidered objectionable and detrimental to the reputation of the young lady, who was expected to make a good match. As already noted, my eyes were rather too frequently fixed upon the shining orbs of the charming Miss Emily ; and although the latter, more from plutocratic pride than innate prudishness, took good care not to give the poor, lame tutor the slightest encouragement, the parents nevertheless thought it necessary to guard against such an eventuality, and decided to dismiss me. The actual cause which hastened this decision was, as far as I can remember, a lesson in writing. For when I noticed that Miss Emily did not form some of her letters quite correctly, I took hold of her hand to guide it. The contact with the white, plump little hand—although at first I managed to guide it mechanically—soon sent the fire of passion tingling into my finger-tips, and when a gentle pressure revealed the fact that not mere caligraphic zeal but another motive stirred within me, the young lady jumped up, gave me an angry look, and left the room. This decided my fate, and I was dismissed.

The announcement was grievous, even painful to me, not so much because I had to leave my quiet haven of rest, and the beacon of my first and only love, but because here, as in Zsámbokrét, I had proved to be a very bad financier. Of the considerable salary of 600 florins per annum, I had spent most on books and clothes, and only saved enough to take me to Pest, and on to Duna Szer-

dahely, where at my mother's special request I had decided to go, as she had a great desire to see me after an absence of several years. The parting from this quiet spot, where I had spent the happiest eighteen months of my life, was very hard indeed, and when I took leave of the old cherry-tree, under whose shade I had spent so many blissful hours with the intellectual heroes of Italy, England, France and Spain, I cried for hours, and with good reason, for never again in all my life have I had moments of such pure enjoyment.

It goes without saying that during my stay in Slavonia I made myself thoroughly acquainted with the Illyric, *i.e.*, South-Slavonic language, both written and conversational. Well stocked with knowledge, but poor in purse, I now had to face my mother, in whose eyes the material side of life had most value. A few new clothes in my knapsack and a silver watch in my pocket could not satisfy her; she upbraided me with lack of practical common sense, and always wanted to know whither the knowledge of so many languages would lead me, and whether, considering all the time spent in study, I could not get a regular position or appointment of some kind. Higher aims were beyond the ken of the good, practical woman, and although always full of affection for me, she could not help now and then expressing her anxiety as to my future, and hinted that I should have done better to follow the regular course of study, take my degree at the University,

and become a doctor of medicine. I tried once or twice to explain to her that the knowledge of so many, and especially of Oriental, languages might one day make me famous; that I might become interpreter at one of the embassies; but she was quite unable to take this in. The uncertainty of my future troubled her much, and it grieved me deeply not to be able to make her see it in a different and better light. After a short visit I again took leave of her, once more to throw myself into the world's turmoil.

As my self-conceit had grown with the acquisition of so many languages, and the stimulus of praise, which up to now had only been vouchsafed to me by the lower classes of society, had puffed me up with egotism, I fancied myself worthy of something better than the humble position of tutor in a Jewish family. I even imagined that my capacities and learning ought to secure me a position under Government, and for this purpose I travelled to Vienna, where I hoped to obtain from the Minister of Foreign Affairs an appointment as interpreter. Of course I failed; for in the first place I was a perfect stranger and had no introductions, and in the second place I was absolutely ignorant of the preliminary steps that had to be taken; of the pedantic and tortuous passages of Austrian bureaucracy. Realising the fruitlessness of my efforts, I endeavoured to get private lessons. I

advertised in the Vienna newspapers; but the high-flown announcements of my mezzofantic perfections remained without the slightest result, and the worthy ladies' tailor, in whose house on the high-road I had hired a bed on the fourth story, was much wiser than I, for he advised me to leave Vienna and go back to Pest, as long as I still had a few books and some clothes to dispose of to defray the travelling expenses; otherwise, he said, I should fare badly.

I was bound to acknowledge that the tailor had more common sense than I, and the only reason that I did not immediately act upon his suggestion was that I had still a lingering hope that the acquaintances I had made in Vienna might yet shed a little brightness over the horizon of my future career. I had had the good fortune of making the personal acquaintance of some linguistic celebrities. In the hotel "The Wild Man" in Kärthner Street I had met the great Orientalist Baron Hammer Purgstall, who had introduced me to the young Baron Schlechta, and encouraged me to persevere in the study of Turkology. The old gentleman spoke to me of my very learned countrymen in Turkology, Gévay and Huszár, and was of opinion that we Hungarians had most exceptional advantages for the study of Oriental languages. I also came into contact with the great Servian poet and writer, Vuk Karačič. Under his humble roof on the Haymarket I was urged to take up the study of the South-Slavonic tongue; and his daughter, a

highly cultured lady, took a special interest in my destiny, and was much surprised when I recited with pathos long passages from Davoria, viz., *Heroic Songs*. Mr. Rayewski, the priest of the Russian Embassy, also received me kindly. The good man wanted to win me for Russian literature, perhaps also for its orthodoxy, for he gave me Russian books, and advised me to make a journey to St. Petersburg, whereas I afterwards took my way in quite a different direction. There certainly was no want of good advice, friendly hints and encouragements, but a beautiful lack of practical help.

It was well for me that I turned my back on the beautiful Imperial city of the Danube to try my fortune once again in Pest, where, as Hungarian, I felt more at home. I alighted at a house in the street of the Three Drums, No. 7. It was a house on the level, with a long court, and inhabited for the greater part by poor people who could only pay their rent by letting one or two beds to third parties and sharing their one living room with several others. I lived at door No. 5 with Madame Schönfeld, a certificated nurse, who had but little practice, and an invalid husband into the bargain. Therefore she had four beds for hire put up in her room, in which eight persons, *i.e.*, two in each bed, were accommodated. Poor artisans who spent their days in the workshop had here their night-quarters, and I, a special favourite of the childless Madame Schönfeld, had the privilege of receiving for my bedfellow a

thin tailor-lad, who, because of his lanky proportions, did not take up quite so much room in the bed, and so allowed me a certain amount of comfort; for although we lay in bed sardine fashion it happened sometimes that the more corpulent and stronger bedfellow kicked his mate out of bed in the night. In these surroundings, which cannot exactly be called regal, I awaited the favourable moment at which that friend of my fortunes (Mr. Mayer, already mentioned) should provide me with another appointment as tutor. Weeks and months passed by, during which time I had to subsist on the scanty remuneration given for private lessons. The more I advanced in my studies the more painful it was to teach French or English for two or three florins per month; but my poverty-stricken appearance denied me entrance into the better circles of the capital, and as I had no friends I hesitated to approach any one who might possibly have lent me a helping hand. The remembrance of house No. 7 in the street of the Three Drums recalls a series of privations and sufferings in which hunger, that bitter enemy of my younger days, plays a principal part. As long as this terrible tyrant plagued me I was rather spiritless and depressed, and it was only in my books that I could find comfort against the gnawing pain; for although the Latin proverb rightly says, "*Plenus venter non studet libenter*," I nevertheless have experienced that with an empty or half-satisfied

stomach my intellectual elasticity has been greater and my memory intensified so that I was able to accomplish extraordinary things.

I am not exaggerating when I say that during this interval of my professional duties I devoted daily ten or twelve hours assiduously to linguistic studies. To the Romanic and Germanic languages I had added the study of the Slavonic dialects. The Slovak dialect I had learned conversationally at St. Georghen and Zsámbokrét; Illyric at Kutyevo; I had also studied the literatures of these languages. I now applied myself to learn Russian, which of course was a comparatively easy matter, and I revelled in the works of Pushkin, Lermontoff, Batyushka, Dershavin, and other northern writers. I particularly enjoyed changing about from one poet to another, wandering from north to south, from east to west. Now I read a few pages from the *Orlando Furioso*, then again a few verses from the *Fountain in Bagtcheseraj* of Pushkin, and from the *Prisoner of the Caucasus*. Here an Andalusian picture unrolled itself before my eyes—a charming scene on the glorious Ebro, with its pastoral groups, from Galatea or Estrée. Next I admired a northern sea-fight from the *Frithiof Sága*, or amused myself with Andersen's Fairy Tales, or the simple popular songs of *Gusle* by Vuk Karačič. My joy and my delight were boundless; my eyes shone, my cheeks were flushed. Every fibre in my body tingled with the excite-

ment of the lyric or epic contents of these various works. One can only read with such thorough appreciation, such deep feeling, in one's early twenties, when the knowledge of the language has been acquired with much trouble and alone and when abhorring and despising the mundane character of one's surroundings, and carried away on the wings of one's heated imagination, one roams about in higher spheres. The contrast of my own enthusiastic imagination and the life of the people with whom I associated was about as great as one can well conceive. Bartering Jews of the most prosaic type, artisans, day-labourers, and shop-assistants, their only thought how to earn a few coppers, and to spend them again straight away; menders and cleaners of old clothes, poor women and pedlars—such were the people I associated with, and who, looking upon me as half demented, sometimes pitied and sometimes mocked me. In the winter-time it was very hard, for then I had to suffer from cold as well as hunger, especially when the public reading-room of the University was closed, and I was reduced to sit in Madame Schönfeld's parlour in the Three Drums Street, where no fire was provided in the daytime. In broad daylight it was not so bad, for I could jump up and run up and down to get warm. But when it grew dark I was obliged to go to the Café Szégedin round the corner of the Three Drums Street; and there, huddled up in a corner of the

room, I read my books by the light of a flickering lamp, regardless of the frantic noise of the gambling, laughing, bartering crowd. As I could not pay an entrance fee I had to go home before the gate was locked. Generally I found all in bed, and continued my studies by the light of a tallow candle stuck in a broken candlestick, while the sleeping inmates of the room accompanied my recital—for I always read aloud—with a snoring duet or terzet, without my interfering with their sleep or they with my reading. I allowed myself but very little sleep at that time, for in the early morning I had to give a lesson next door to the son of Mr. Rosner, the owner of a coffee-house, for which I received every day a mug of coffee and two little rolls. Two rolls, and my ferocious hunger! What a contrast! I could easily have demolished half a dozen, and I had earned them too; but man, whether the owner of a coffee-shop or of a rich gold-mine, always seeks to make all he can out of the wretchedness of his fellow-creatures, and this sad truth I had to realise very early.

At last the weary time of waiting came to an end and I was released from my uncomfortable position. After several afternoons spent on the rack at the Café Orczy, my deliverer, the agent Mayer, succeeded in getting me an appointment with the wealthy Schweiger family in Kecskemét, where I was well paid, well cared for, but was also hard worked. Here I spent a year profitably. I had to

teach for eight or nine hours daily; two or three hours were spent over toilet and meals, and when I add that my private studies occupied at least six hours a day, one sees how little time I could afford to give to rest, and how very few were the pleasures in which, at that period of the never-returning spring of life, I was able to indulge. And yet I am told that in those days I was always bright and merry, sometimes even quite reckless and extravagant in my mirth—a characteristic which did not agree well with my position of tutor. My pupils, who were only three or four years younger than myself, made good progress in their studies, but their education left much to be desired. In Kecskemét, where I had more money at my disposal than ever before, and where I was able to procure the expensive books necessary for the study of Oriental languages, I made Turkish and Arabic my chief objects of study. At that time Professor Ballagi lived in that neighbourhood, and he lent me Arabic books. Thus I was able, assisted by my knowledge of Hebrew, to make rapid progress in the second Semitic language, and by the help of Arabic also to perfect myself in Turkish. The strange characters, the difficulty of learning to read, and the want of dictionaries, which were too expensive for me to buy, were terrible obstacles in my way; often I was almost driven to distraction, and the hours spent in the shady little Protestant churchyard of Kecskemét, where I loved to linger

near the grave of two lovers, will ever remain in my memory.

The reason of my being only one year with the family Schweiger I cannot quite remember. Enough to say that I returned again to Pest, that I once more occupied the seat of disgrace in the Café Orczy, and went from there to the Puszta Cseĕv, not far from Monor, to a Mr. Schauengel, where I stayed only six months, fortunately in the spring and summer; for life in a lonely house on the Puszta (Heath), notwithstanding my love of solitude, soon became too much for me, and the terrible monotony of the scenery made me almost melancholy. Here I had the first foretaste of the Steppe regions of Central Asia, afterwards to be the scenes of my adventurous travels. On the Puszta itself no tree was to be seen for miles round, and when in the afternoons I wanted to read out of doors, the only shade I could find against the scorching sun of the hot summer months was under a haycock or straw-rick. Exhausted with the hard study of the Orientalia, I used to indulge here in my favourite reading of the Odyssey, for I had meanwhile also learned Greek. Stretched out on the grass I recited aloud the glorious scenes and wonderful stories, and never noticed the shepherd who was grazing his flock in the neighbourhood, standing before me, both hands leaning on his staff, and listening in breathless attention to the strange sounds, half admiring, half pitying me; for on the

Puszta they all thought I was possessed of the devil—a man who had learned far too much, lost his reason, and now talked nonsense. When in my lonely walks I stood still and gazed into the far distance, these simple children of nature used to look at me with a kind of reverence and awe; sometimes they avoided me, and only the most daring of them ventured to approach and question me as to a lost head of cattle or about the weather. My fame as an eccentric spread over the whole neighbourhood, and to this I owed my invitation to the house of Mr. Karl Balla, the owner of the neighbouring Puszta Pot-Haraszt, and late director of the prison of the Pest county. Herr Balla, an elderly, humane, and amiable man, a passionate meteorologist, who had on his Puszta erected high poles with weathercocks, had also the reputation of being an eccentric. Like seeks like; a mutual friendship grew up between us, and when he proposed to me to come and spend the winter at his house and instruct his son Zádor in French and English, I gladly accepted, the more so as Mr. Schauengel intended to send his children to town for the winter, and I should therefore again have been out of a place.

As far as the personality of my principal was concerned, my residence at Pot-Haraszti promised to be very pleasant indeed. I had a quiet, large room looking into the garden, the food was excellent, my teaching duties only occupied a few hours

of the day, and I had plenty of time and leisure to devote to the study of the Oriental languages, more especially Turkish, Arabic, and Persian. The latter had a particularly magic influence upon me at that time, and the literary treasures which I found in a Chrestomathy of Vullers filled me with an ecstasy of delight. Sadi, Jámí, and Khakani were ideals to which I gladly sacrificed many a night's sleep and many a drive. Unfortunately the family of Herr Balla had not attained to the same degree of culture as the paterfamilias. The lady of the house could never bear the idea that a Jew was occupying the position of prefect in her house, and her constant sneering at my origin and my want of gentlemanly manners necessarily undermined my authority over my pupils; there were unpleasant scenes every day, and when these gave rise to family quarrels—for the old gentleman always firmly took my side—I made up my mind, though with a heavy heart, to leave this spot so favourable to my studies, and went to Pest, where, after waiting six months, I obtained an equally good position at Csetény, in the county of Veszprém, with Mr. Grünfeld, who rented the place.

This was my last position as private tutor in Hungary, and the kind treatment which I received from the generous and noble-minded Grünfeld family has also left the most vivid and pleasant recollections of my varied and sometimes very

difficult pedagogic career. Only one sad circumstance is connected with my sojourn in this quiet village in the Bakony, and it has left its ineffaceable traces on my memory. It was on the 11th of November, 1856, on a rainy evening that, after remaining in the family circle in pleasant conversation till ten o'clock, I was just about to retire to my room, which was outside in the court. As I opened the front door I saw to my horror a number of masked people before me, one of whom took me by the chest and threw me with force back into the room, while the others stormed in after him, each of them taking hold of a member of the panic-stricken family, threatening to kill any one who dared to utter a sound. It was a band of robbers who had come over from the neighbouring Bakony Forest. They had watched their opportunity to attack Mr. Grünfeld, who had returned the day before with a considerable sum of money from the Pest Market. Lying on the floor with one of those ruffians kneeling on my chest and the barrel of the pistol wet with the rain pressed to my forehead, I gradually recovered my senses. The sight of that dim, lamplighted scene, with the ghastly faces of the terror-stricken family, has stamped itself for ever on my memory like some dreadful dream.

Still more terrible scenes followed. We were dragged from one room to the other, and while the servants of the house stood bound outside, sighing

and groaning, Mr. Grünfeld was requested to give up all his effects and money. He was robbed of about 20,000 florins; but as this did not satisfy the rapacity of those wild fellows, and one of them pointed the barrel of his gun to the breast of the father of the family, I lost all patience, jumped up, and placing the weapon on my own breast I cried, "If you must kill, kill me; I have neither wife nor child, it is better that I should die." These words seemed to make an impression on the leader of the band, probably a political fugitive who had retired into the forest to escape the vengeance of the Austrian Government, for at a sign from him his accomplices refrained from shedding blood. They collected all the money and valuables, and after searching my room also, but only depriving me of some volumes of Hungarian classics, they went away, leaving us all locked up in the dark room.

This ghastly nocturnal scene might have had serious consequences for me, for the police of the district of Zircz, to which Csetény belonged, came upon the bright idea of suspecting me—who even at that time as a Hungarian scholar was in touch with the Hungarian Academy of Sciences—to be a secret accomplice of this robber band of fugitive rebels; and they were strengthened in their suspicion by the fact that I had opened the door, and, with the exception of the books, had escaped without loss. A zealous anti-Magyar even went so far

as to suggest that it would be wise to take me into custody, and await my trial. I should certainly have been locked up and treated for months like any common criminal, if my good friend Mr. Grünfeld had not answered for me and affirmed my innocence. Instead of going to the sunny Levant, I might have been shut up in prison without any fault of mine.

This sojourn with the Grünfeld family concluded my career as private tutor. All my thoughts were now fixed upon the idea of accomplishing something definite, something more in keeping with all my previous studies, and no longer running wildly after chimeras. I therefore made up my mind to go to the East at once, and though it cost me much to leave the peaceful haven of rest and comfort, I took the necessary steps to set out on my travels. The last link with the land of my birth was broken, for my mother, whom I dearly loved, died shortly before my departure. My name was the last word that passed her lips, and her death left me absolutely alone, with no one to care for me in all the world.

Before concluding this chapter of my career as private tutor, I must not forget to mention that these six years were the most productive of all my life and formed the nucleus of all my future actions. Looking back upon the many vicissitudes of my early life, the long chain of incredible privations, and the insatiable desire for knowledge, I must

confess with sorrow that my labour would have been far more profitable and beneficial if I had not been led astray by my rare power of memory and an innate talent for languages and conversation; if, instead of blindly rushing forward regardless of obstacles, I had worked more quietly, more leisurely, and more thoroughly. I had an immense number of foreign languages in my head. I could say by heart long passages from the Parnasso Italiano, Byron, Pushkin, Tegner, and Saadi. I could speak fluently and write moderately well in several of these languages; yet my learning was absolutely without system or method, and it was not until I had had actual intercourse with the various nations and had paid the penalty of my many shortcomings and erroneous notions, that I could rejoice in having attained a certain degree of perfection. It is chiefly due to this haste and eagerness to get on that in the course of my later studies I always preferred a wide field of action to great depth, and always set my mind rather on expansion than on penetration.

Nor will I hide the fact that, in spite of want and distress, in spite of poverty and loneliness, a great longing for the pleasures and dissipations of youth often possessed me, and that in order to avoid useless waste of time I had to keep a very strict watch, and often had to reprimand and punish myself. For many years I used to spend New Year's Eve in solitude to

give an account to myself of all I had done in the past twelve months, and to write out and seal the programme for the new year; and when I opened this on the following 31st of December and saw that some one or other point had remained unaccomplished, I wrote bitter reproaches on the margin as reminders, and was out of sorts for days. Besides this, I had my daily calendar, marked with the rubrics for different subjects of study, which had to be attended to before going to sleep. If by chance one or other of these rubrics had not been filled in, I tried to make up for it the next day, and when I could not manage that I punished myself by absenting myself from the table under the pretext of a headache or indigestion. With my healthy appetite this was the severest punishment I could think of, and the irritating clatter of plates and knives and forks from the adjoining dining-room was indeed a sore temptation.

Now I can smile over this self-chastisement; but he who has to fight by himself the battle of youthful folly may easily fall a victim to thoughtlessness. The eye becomes dazzled by the rosy, smiling picture of the present, and gets weary of looking into the future.

My young readers, who enter the school of life guided by the admonitions of parents or teachers, do not realise perhaps how beneficial and useful these disagreeable-sounding corrections may be some day. They are the stars that twinkle in the perilous dark-

ness of youthful eagerness. I missed these helps, and I must call myself fortunate that a kind Providence spared me the sad consequences of this want.

My First Journey to the East

CHAPTER IV

MY FIRST JOURNEY TO THE EAST

From the little foretaste which my theoretical studies had given me of the immense depths of delight contained in Oriental literature, it had become quite clear to me that in order fully to understand and appreciate this strange and wonderful world it would be absolutely necessary to have a more intimate knowledge of the land and its bizarre inhabitants. When I was still in Kecskemét I had been planning a journey to the East, and since that time the enchanting pictures which the Oriental poets conjured up had ever been before my eyes. But how could I, devoid of all means, and scarcely able to procure the bare necessaries of life—how could I possibly dream of undertaking a journey which at that time was very expensive? I pondered in vain. But now I had saved 120 florins from my last salary as tutor. I was thoroughly weary of teaching, and possessed by a wild desire for adventure. The time seemed come at last to carry out my ambitious plans. I deter-

mined to start for Constantinople *viâ* Galatz as soon as ever I could get ready. The means at my disposal would cover only half of my travelling expenses, and arrived in Constantinople I should be penniless, without recommendation, without friends, an utter stranger, with nothing but starvation before me. But none of these things troubled me, nor did I worry myself about the possible issue of my hazardous scheme. The glorious Bosporus, the Golden Horn, the slender minarets, the stately cupolas of the mosques, the turbaned Turks, and closely veiled Turkish women, and many other marvels which I was about to behold, had entirely captivated my imagination, and I had no thought left for the prosaic details of travelling preparations and expenses, and the care for daily food. "I shall manage somehow," I said to myself, and the only thing that caused me some uneasiness was how to get a passport from the Austrian authorities. Just then they were always very suspicious of any one going to Turkey, for it was the favourite resort of Hungarian emigrants, and it was thought in Vienna that rebellious schemes were being hatched there. Without protection I could do nothing, and by good fortune the Baron Joseph Eötvös came to my rescue. I had made the acquaintance of this noble-minded, highly-cultured countryman of mine some little time before. He, the distinguished and kind-hearted author and scientist, having accidentally heard of me, had expressed a wish to make my

personal acquaintance. I was then in great want and distress. My foot covering was in a very dilapidated condition, the soles of my shoes were in holes, and as I did not like to come into the room from the dirty street in the rags which covered my feet I tied pasteboard soles under my shoes. In spite of this precaution my feet left unmistakable traces on the carpet, much to the annoyance of the servants, no doubt, but the noble baron only smiled at my discomfiture; he set me at my ease and questioned me as to what had induced me to take up the study of philology. He promised me his protection and also gave me an introduction to the Academy library, so that I could borrow books, which was of great service to me in my studies. When I spoke to him about the passport he managed, not without a good deal of trouble, to influence in my favour the then Governor, a man highly esteemed in Government circles. The noble baron even went so far as to start a collection for my benefit, but this failed, and when I took leave of him, although not rich himself, he gave me some money and clothes, requesting me to let him have news of me from time to time.

Provided with the necessary legal documents, I soon after packed up my dictionaries, a few favourite authors, and some underclothes, and was ready to start. Again at the recommendation of Baron Eötvös I was provided with a ticket to Galatz at half price, and I went on board one fine

morning in the month of May, 1857, to enter the "land of romance," as Wieland calls it in his *Oberon*, with no one to see me off, no one to weep, no one to grieve over me. The reader will easily imagine the joyful exultation and rapturous delight which filled my whole being. As my little stock of ready money had considerably diminished during the prolonged delay, I had only taken a second-class ticket. All day I remained on deck, entering into conversation with my fellow-travellers, old and young, great and small, and of many different nationalities; and as I could address them all in their mother-tongue my versatility called forth much admiration, which sometimes expressed itself in the offer of a drink, sometimes in an invitation to share a modest repast, which I always gladly accepted. After a good meal my hilarity generally rose a few degrees, and in this agreeable state of mind I was always pleased to recite some beautiful passage or other from one of my favourite authors, and especially from Petrarch's *Sonnets*. It was with the "Hermit of Vaucluse" that I first gained the favour of the Italian ship's cook, who invited me to sit down by his kitchen door, and while I was gaily declaiming outside, the poetically inclined cook inside stirred his pans with all the more vigour, and an occasional bravo! or *ben fatto!* for my benefit. Of course the practical tokens of his favour were not wanting, for Mr. Cook handed me from time to time a plateful of the best food

his kitchen could produce. Thus I lived in plenty and comfort, and often had to confess to myself that my adventurous sail to the East had with this passage of the Danube commenced under the very best auspices. I was particularly fascinated by the variety of nationalities around me. For the first time in my life the narrow limits of a ship afforded me the opportunity of conversing with representatives of so many different nations, that I could now at pleasure put into practice my theoretical and letter knowledge; and although my queer pronunciation and faulty accentuation often made it difficult for the foreigners to understand me, I very soon learned to understand them, and after a while I was surprised to find how smoothly and fluently the conversation went along. When at Widdin I first saw real live Turks, and my surprise and astonishment knew no bounds. My first acquaintance with a Mussulman was of special interest. It was evening, the sun was going down, and its last rays shone on the deck swarming with natives from Servia, Wallachia, Bulgaria, and Turkey. A venerable follower of the Prophet stepped forth, spread his carpet in a corner of the deck, and began to perform his "Akhsham Namazi," *i.e.*, evening devotions. The sight of this old man prostrating himself in all humility and contrition of heart, with his head bent low, and arms limply stretched out in front of him, made a deep impression upon me. I never took my eyes off him, and when he rose from

his prayers and rolled up his carpet, I came forward and addressed him. I was pleased to find that he was willing to talk to me; he told me that his name was Mehemed Aga and that he came from Lofcha. He was now on his way to Stambul to visit his son Djewdet Effendi, who was studying there, and who afterwards became known as Historiographer and Minister of Justice. From Stambul he intended to go on to Mecca. The name "Madjar" (Hungarian) stood at that time in good repute with the Turks, who had interested themselves for the emigrating Hungarians; and when I had shown the dear old man my Turkish reading book, a religious work entitled *Kyrk Sual* (the Forty Questions), and had read something aloud out of it, his confidence increased, he invited me to supper, and throughout the voyage proved himself a good, kind friend to me.

Other acquaintances of a similar nature helped to clear away the black clouds which darkened the horizon of my future in the strange land. The sail up the Danube as far as Galatz soon came to an end, and I was fortunate enough to secure a half deck-ticket on one of the Lloyd steamers. I was supremely happy, as now for the first time in my life I should see the briny ocean, so familiar to me from the descriptions of Byron and Tegner and other master poets; and when I beheld its mighty grandeur I was almost giddy with delight and admiration. In order to watch the motion of the waves more closely I stationed

myself, with permission of the sailors, on a projection near to the bowsprit, and I imagined I was riding a dolphin, with the salt waves splashing round me. Thus I accomplished the first few miles on the dark waters of the Pontus Euxinus. I literally bathed in a sea of delight. I sang, I shouted in my exultation, and until far into the night my voice vied with the seagulls and the clamour of the ship's crew behind me. At last, nearly soaked through with the spray, I left my perch and retired to a corner of the deck which the Turks had taken possession of, and soon fell fast asleep. About midnight I was roused by the jerky motion of the ship, and got up. The howling of the wind, the creaking of the planks, the jolting and bumping of the vessel, the sighs and groans of the passengers, and especially of the Turkish women, soon made me realise that I was to have the good fortune of witnessing the terrible majesty of the Euxine in a real storm. Regardless of the consternation round me, the fright, the lamentations, the cries, and the general confusion, I steered my way along the pitch-dark deck, and was beside myself with joy when an occasional flash of lightning gave me a sight of the awful spectacle around, and the black waves towering high above us. Oh! the horror and the delight of it! My dearest wishes were realised, and as I stood leaning against the railing which separated our quarter from the deck of the first-class passengers, and in my

rapturous excitement began to declaim a few stanzas from the *Henriade*, I noticed that a traveller, pacing up and down on the other side, occasionally stopped to listen; and after a while he shouted to me in French, "Who are you; what makes you think of the *Henriade* just now?" After a little conversation I found that I was talking to the Secretary of the Belgian Legation at Constantinople. The next morning he talked for a long time with me, and finally asked me to come and see him at Pera.

Needless to say I was deeply impressed by the entrance of the Bosporus, and it was not until the ship had cast anchor at the Golden Horn opposite Galata, and the passengers crowding into the boats had gone ashore, that I awoke from my dreams and began to realise my critical position. I had only just enough money in my pocket to pay for the ferryboat, without the slightest idea where to go or what to do. There I stood, penniless, in an utterly strange town. As far as I can remember I was about two hours climbing up the steep incline between Galata and Pera. I was so fascinated by the absolute grotesqueness of the life around me, the chaos of languages, gaudy costumes and strange physiognomies, that I was obliged to stop every few minutes, rooted, as it were, to the spot. Pushed on all sides, I felt myself suddenly seized by the shoulder, and some one addressed me first in Italian and then in Hungarian. I stood face to face with

Mr. Püspöki, my countryman and an emigrant. My Hungarian hat with the flying ribbons had attracted his attention, and he began to question me as to the aim and object of my journey. "Ah, perhaps you are the philologer of whose journey to the East we have read in the Hungarian papers?" "Yes," I answered; "and since you are the first countryman I have met, you must help me to find a lodging and work to do." The good man looked at me with surprise; he seemed to have guessed the emptiness of my pocket, and in order not to raise my hopes too high he told me that he was not doing very well himself, and that just at present he was looking for a cook's place, and would gladly share his modest quarters with me. Talking about the beloved fatherland, the absolutism of the Austrians, and the miserable condition of Turkey, he led me through a labyrinth of dirty, narrow passages to his abode behind the wall of the English Embassy. This dwelling consisted of one bare room, with broken windows, and as its only furniture a long, torn, Turkish divan, which he pulled forward, inviting me to sit down. "Half of it is mine, and the other yours," said kind-hearted Mr. Püspöki; "and as for food, I will show you a locanda (eating-house), where, if you happen to have cash, you can get a good meal very reasonably." He took me to a basement place in what is now the Grande Rue de Pera, and which bore the pompous title of "Café Flamm de Vienne." They sold

café-au-lait and Vienna rolls, quite a novelty for the East in those days. Here I found other compatriots lounging about, some in Turkish military uniform, some in threadbare clothes. The majority gave me a hearty welcome, but a few eyed me suspiciously, for just then the emigrants dreaded to find in every fresh arrival from Hungary an Austrian spy, sent over to report about them to the authorities. However, the harmlessness of my personality soon reassured them, and all suspicions were allayed when they found that I could read Turkish and speak it a little as well. Some of them invited me to breakfast straight away, to which meal I did full justice.

After the conclusion of the Crimean War this Café Flamm had become the favourite haunt of disillusioned adventurers, officers out of employ, bankrupt merchants, despairing emigrants, political enthusiasts, and heroes of all trades and nationalities. To judge from the conversation of these almost always hungry gentlemen, the fate of Europe and of Turkey was to be decided in this dingy, smoky parlour; they played ball with Sovereigns and Ministers of State to their hearts' content; they all had their own plans and views for the amelioration of the world, and each of them secretly believed that it was merely a question of time for him to get to the head of affairs in Turkey. The modern Argonaut expedition of united Europe to the northern banks of the Euxine had created during

and since the Crimean War quite a marvellous host of knights of the Golden Fleece, and had opened the romantic East to the romantic children of the West. The tailor's apprentice is in this "Foreign Legion" suddenly promoted to be a first lieutenant or captain; hotel waiters become secretaries and interpreters; journalists blossom forth as great strategists, financiers, and diplomatists; ensigns are for the nonce colonels and generals; and when, after the violent attack on the Malakoff, the angel of peace appeared on the banks of the Seine, vanished was the glitter of the golden existence in the Golden Horn; the heroes, one and all, subsided into their former insignificance, and met at the Café Flamm to sweeten the bitter bread of sad reality by the concoction of still more high-flown plans for the future. The various types I saw in this coffee-house and the hours spent there will ever remain fresh in my memory.

In this manner the first days of my sojourn in Pera passed away. I traversed in all directions both the European and the Turkish quarters of the town, and always liked to enter into conversation with the Turks lounging in the coffee-houses; I read aloud from the Turkish books I always carried about with me, and noticed that the Mohammedans, easily influenced and affable folks, were impressed by my knowledge of Turkish and Persian, and regarded me as a kind of prodigy who, having arrived in Stambul only a day or two ago, already spoke Turkish

like an Effendi. On account of the great difference between the language of the educated classes and of the people, those who speak the former are always treated with a certain amount of respect, especially if they are unbelievers; and as at that time the sympathies of the Turks for the Hungarians had reached their height, the kindness of these good Osmanli seemed quite natural to me; and when in any of the coffee-houses I read aloud passages from "Ashik Garib" ("The Amorous Foreigner"), or from another popular poem, with the right accentuation and modulation, I generally reaped a rich harvest of bread, cheese, and coffee, sometimes even Kebab (roast beef) or Pilaf and Pastirma (dry, smoked meat). At night I availed myself of Mr. Püspöki's hospitality, and slept excellently on my miserable couch, in spite of the fiendish noise of the rats racing about in the room. Their presence was at first rather objectionable to me, as they gnawed my boots and my clothes, but afterwards, when the necessary precautions had been taken, I did not trouble any more about them. Favoured by fine weather, in the charm of novelty the first six weeks of my stay in Constantinople passed away pleasantly. I never knew in the morning where I should eat in the evening: the future did not trouble me in the least; and as I had now changed my hat for a fez, and looked shabby enough to pass for a wandering lecturer, I spent my days enjoying to the full my vagabond life.

The mixed nationalities that I came into contact with on the banks of the Bosporus, were exactly what I needed to complete my theoretical knowledge of their languages, and ear and memory stood each other in good stead. I soon acquired the correct accent and construction; and imitating the different languages as closely as I could in tone and sound, many took me for a native, and the jokes and jests caused by this muddle of languages gave me many a delicious moment. Unfortunately my happiness was somewhat marred by the sudden departure of Mr. Püspöki, who had found employment as cook on one of the steamers of the Messageries Impériales, for this made me lose my night quarters, and I had to hunt about for a long time, until at last the secretary of the Hungarian Association — Magyar Egylet — proposed that I should take up my quarters in the council-room of the Society, which was likely soon to be dissolved. In this large, empty hall I found an old sofa, on which I stretched myself, but the evenings were cool and I could not sleep. So I begged Mr. Frecskay, which was the secretary's name, to give me a wrap of some kind. The good-hearted man appeared presently with a torn tricolor in his hand, handed it to me with grave pathos, and said, "I have nothing but this precious memento of our glorious struggle. This flag has sent the fire of enthusiasm into the lines of our fighters for justice and freedom; cover yourself with it, it will warm you also." Of

course I could not continue to sleep there, so I set off once more in search of a bed, and soon found help in the person of another compatriot, Major E. This man had unfortunately lost his watch-dog, and as his wife would not be left alone in the lonely house near Hasskŏi, he invited me to take up my abode there while he was away on business in the provinces, and until he had procured another watchdog. So I was to occupy the vacant position of watchdog! It was not particularly inviting; but turned out rather better than I expected. Instead of a dog-kennel I had a comfortable room, and plenty of coffee and bread for breakfast. So I contented myself with the exchange, and continued my old Bohemian life.

The mornings were chiefly devoted to reading Turkish books, then I cleaned out the yard and fetched water from the well some little distance off, and towards evening I repaired to different coffee-houses to gain a piaster or two by reciting familiar love-poems. No sooner was I seated there on a high stool surrounded by Turks and Armenians, and had begun to recite in a nasal sing-song tone, when the conversation gradually dropped, and the rattling of the nargiles began to subside. They listened to the love-sick lamentations of Wamik and Esra, of Khossru and Shirin, where the sad fate of the lovers is recounted. My readings and recitations were generally attended by the manifestations of violent emotion or admiration on the part of my

audience. In my subsequent travels in Persia I have often experienced the same thing; and even now, when I think of those times, the spell of the scene comes over me again, and I revel in the memory of those early days, when I could gain the ear of those regular Orientals and keep the crowds spellbound. Truly speech, the spoken word, is a mighty instrument! By it mountains are levelled and hearts hard as rock are softened. Differences of faith and nationality vanish before it; and as I had the good fortune to experience all this at the very outset of my adventurous career in Asia, many dark outlines of the far-off future were smoothed away.

Thus the days passed swiftly until the approach of autumn, when I began to realise the seriousness of my condition, and once more I made up my mind to try to get lessons or a permanent appointment as private tutor, in order to make a decent living. In the East bombastic speeches and high-flown announcements are not at all a rarity; nevertheless the advertisement which I had fixed up in all the booksellers' shops in Pera, and in which I offered myself as teacher of a whole string of Western and Eastern languages, attracted much attention. Bizarre, absurd, and fantastic as my advertisement was, it did not fail in its object, for before long I was summoned by a Turk in Scutari, and a Mr. von Hübsch, General-Consul of Denmark. The former had just come in for a large sum of money, and in order to do justice to his

position of modern dandy wanted to be able to talk a little French. He wished to take French lessons from me, while the latter, an Easterling by birth, wanted to learn Danish, not so much for conversation, he thought, but rather to be able to read the Danish Court circular and newspapers. Here was a singular and rather perplexing demand upon my Scandinavian studies; in my wildest dreams it had never entered my brain that I might be called upon to teach a representative of Denmark the language of that country! And yet such was the case. For eighteen months Mr. v. Hübsch continued my pupil, and when, at the end of that time, we had finished Andersen's novel *Kun ā Spilleman* ("Only a Fiddler"), and he could read the *Berlinske Tidninger*, I came to the conclusion that there is nothing impossible in this world, and that an adventurous career certainly brings the oddest experiences. I did not get on so well with my Turkish scholar. As a man of fashion his object was merely to have a French *maître* coming to the house, but he was lazy and frivolous, and all the learning that was done was on my side; for in his house at Chamlidjia, on the hill above Scutari, he always entertained a company of Effendis and Porte officials in the evenings, with whom I conversed for hours, and made rapid progress both in Turkish society manners and customs, and in the elegancies of the Osmanli speech. The distance between the landing-stage at Scutari and Chamlid-

jia was a weary journey to accomplish every day on foot, but it was a *gradus ad Parnassum*, and after being in office for three months I could act the Effendi not only in outward appearance, manners, and gesticulations, but I could hold a conversation in Turkish with all the necessary elegance, and was well on the way to becoming a perfect Effendi.

The Turks of the upper classes are very pleasant people, especially when one humours their peculiarities, and takes the trouble to learn their language, one of the most difficult in the world. No wonder, therefore, that my circle of acquaintances perceptibly increased, and that I had constantly fresh applications and fresh invitations as teacher of languages. Thus far I had made Pera my headquarters, but when, through the intervention of my countryman, Ismail Pasha (General Kmetty), I was offered the position of private tutor in the Konak of the Hussain Daim Pasha, in the town-quarter of Kabatash, I accepted at once, adjourned to the Turkish quarter, and henceforth became a regular Turk. Only the name was wanting now, and this was given me by my principal, a worthy Cherkess, who had been educated at the court of Sultan Mahmud; he ordered his household henceforth to address me as *Reshid, i.e.*, the valiant, the honest one; and on the strength of my linguistic skill to give me the title of Effendi. So Reshid Effendi was my official name, but neither the Pasha nor myself had ever thought of a regular Islamising.

The former, a Mohammedan of the purest water, who afterwards became involved in an anti-reform conspiracy, thought no doubt that my conversion would follow as a matter of course, and that, when fully convinced of the material advantages to be derived from joining the ruling class altogether, I should give up all idea of returning to the West. As for myself, the very idea of conversion was far from me. I had long been a confirmed freethinker, and Islam seemed to open a religious world which, because of its sound foundation and rational dogmas, was all the more dangerous to the free soaring upward of the spirit; but with my declared animosity against positive religions in general, it was altogether beyond me to embrace it. At the same time I must admit that the forbearance of the upper classes in the Turkish metropolis was most praiseworthy; for most of them saw perfectly well through the hypocritical nature not only of my Moslemism but of that of other European renegades, and did not pin the slightest faith to the conversion of Europeans; they never in any way, however, disapproved of this incognito, or resented the mere external acknowledgment of the newly adopted faith. In this the better classes of Turkey have always advantageously distinguished themselves from the *soi-disant* cultured classes of European society; for while these latter high-born gentlemen, brought up in the trammels of prejudice, short-sightedness, and hypocrisy, presuppose in

their converts the same lack of inner persuasion, and consider conversion to their views quite a possible thing, the cultured Turk, be he ever so religious, recognises in Islam a world of thought, born and bred in the blood, dependent upon education and mental development, and absolutely impossible of adoption by a man of Western training. They called me Reshid Effendi, they permitted me to be present at and to join in their religious ceremonies, they discussed in my presence frankly and unreservedly the most abstruse religious questions, they even brought me in contact with the friars, and laughed when I joined in the recitation of hymns, or took part in their disputes; but the question whether I really intended to become a Mohammedan, to marry, and to live the life of a regular Moslem, nobody ever thought of asking; that question has been put to me only by the uneducated.

In this manner I was enabled to move in Turkish society as Reshid Effendi without in any way binding myself. The more I became familiar with their social customs, and steeped in the Oriental ways of living and thinking, the larger grew my circle of acquaintances, and the more unreservedly all doors were opened to me, not merely of lower officials but of the higher and even the very highest dignitaries. Turkey knows no aristocracy of birth; the man of obscure origin can suddenly become Marshal and Grand-Vizier; and since most of them, as self-made

men, have no genealogical scruples, so also in the foreigner they do not so much consider his antecedents as his personal capabilities ; and as my fame as professor of the Turkish language spread, I found the doors of the highest society open to me, and in a year's time, I was, with the exception of Murad Effendi (Werner), who lived in the house of Kibrisli Pasha, the only European who, without formally going over to Islam, had become an Effendi and a *protégé* of the Porte circle. Easy as this transformation had been, because of the tolerance of the better classes of Stambul, so much the greater had been the sacrifices which the lower classes demanded from me. Servants play an important part in Turkish households ; they are looked upon as members of the family, and in the patriarchal organisation of the house they have a considerable influence upon the Effendi and Pasha, and especially upon the children. These servants, transported from the interior of European and Asiatic Turkey to the banks of the Bosporus, are generally in the very lowest stage of education ; they are extremely fanatical and suspicious as regards Europeans, and the higher I rose in the favour of the master of the house the higher rose their jealousy and animosity. They could not understand that, notwithstanding my literary and religious knowledge, I did not become a pious Moslem, and why the Pasha, Bey, or Effendi should show me, the disguised Giaour, so much attention. In spite of all that both religion and

national custom prescribe as to the kind treatment of guests, for the Koran says, "Ekremu ed dhaifun ve lau kana kafirun," *i.e.*, "Honour the guest, even if he be an unbeliever," I had much unkindness to bear, and had to put up with many a humiliation. What amused me most was the conduct of the older house-servants; they even played the Mentor towards the governor, his wife, and his children, and often instructed me in rules of etiquette and general views of life. In the eyes of these people infidel Europe was a barbarian wilderness, rejecting the civilising influences of Islam, and it was an act of condescension on the part of the old-stock Turk, brought up within the small Stambul circle, to put me right, and to instruct me in the correct way of sitting, walking, eating, talking, and general comportment. Others, again, were malevolent and fanatical, made me the butt of their ill-chosen jokes, worried me, and once it even happened that a scoundrel, who had risen to be the tyrant of the house, threw his boot at my head because I had not polished it enough to his liking. I had to take all this into the bargain; it was a new school—the school of Oriental life—which I had to pass through, and the fee had to be paid.

After the servants it was the harem, *i.e.*, the Turkish female world, which caused me a good deal of trouble. Turkish women, the fair sex in general, are distinctly conservative, and they could not understand how the Pasha or Effendi could

tolerate the presence of a Giaour in the Selamlik, *i.e.*, in close proximity to the harem, and above all, how he could have come upon the idea of entrusting the education of his children to an infidel. Even now Turkish ladies are much more fanatical than the men; but at that time, the beginning of the reform period, they evinced an ungovernable hatred and aversion against everything Christian. They showed me their dislike in all sorts of teasing ways. Communication between the harem and the outer world is carried on by means of the Dolab, a round, revolving sort of cupboard. Everything intended for the Selamlik is placed in this Dolab, and when the women want to speak with any one outside they do so through the Dolab. When I heard the sound of a woman's voice, and shouted the customary "Buyurun" ("At your service") into the Dolab, I either received no answer at all or else some rude rejoinder; and it was not till later, when I had trained myself to make exquisitely polite speeches and poetic compliments, that they vouchsafed to give me a short answer. After months of effort I succeeded at last in breaking the ice. My youthful fire could not fail to take effect, and the ladies, most of them very beautiful Circassians, who were much neglected by the old invalid master of the house, gradually began to praise my willingness to oblige them and my linguistic proficiency, and proofs of their favour were also forthcoming. In six months' time the

Böyük Hanim (chief wife) entrusted me with the charge of one of the Odalisks, long past the spring of life, who suffered from severe toothache, and had to be taken to a dentist at Pera. The long and difficult road up the steep incline to Pera necessitated a rest midway, and with the afflicted lady I stopped at the house of a Hungarian countryman of mine. The kind hospitality she met with seemed to have pleased the Turkish woman extremely, for soon afterwards more ladies of the harem, some of them quite young, were suddenly seized with toothache, and I had to take them in turns to Pera for dental operations. My intercourse with the inmates of the harem was very strained; it was so difficult to keep to the strict rules of etiquette. I could not accustom myself to cast down my eyes when in the presence of a lady, as Turkish custom demands. It is no small matter at twenty-four to tear one's gaze away from the fiery orbs of a beautiful Circassian. There were other difficulties which it cost me much trouble to overcome.

But, true to my principle to persevere and to bear all things, and hardened by early sufferings, I found strength to pursue the end I had in view. Rising, step by step, I first came into the house of the Chief Chancellor of the Imperial Divan, Afif Bey, whose son-in-law, Kiamil Bey, I taught for about twelve months, and where I had daily intercourse with the *élite* of Porte society. Our house,

opposite the mausoleum of Sultan Mahmud II., not far from the High Porte, was the rendezvous of men of wit and genius, celebrated authors, and high society generally. Here I made the acquaintance of Midhat Pasha, afterwards celebrated in Europe as the father of the Turkish constitution. He was then Midhat Effendi, and occupied the position of secretary to my Pasha. Midhat was a lively young man of a restless and fanciful turn of mind ; he was studying French at that time, and as he had not the patience, while reading, to look up words in the dictionary, he began to read with me for a few hours every day, in return for which he helped me to decipher difficult Turkish texts, as, for instance, in the historical works of Saaddesdin of Kemal-pashazade, or he corrected my compositions and introduced me into the Medrissa (college) for Osmanlis, where I was allowed to attend the lectures of celebrated exegetists, grammarians, and lawyers of the time, in company with the Softas (students of divinity). Here, crouching before the Rahle (Koran-desk) at the feet of the thickly turbaned Khodjas (teachers), I was introduced into the practical knowledge of Islam, and the instruction which my fellow-students accepted with religious enthusiasm was to me all the more interesting as, rising higher and higher in the estimation of the Turks in general, I gained possession of the talisman which has been my guide in all my subsequent journeys and wanderings. Amongst the

many Europeans who have formally gone over to Islam, I was the first to be educated at a Medresse (university), and the study seemed the easier to me as the ruling spirit here strongly reminded me of the Orthodox Jewish schools. Here, as there, discussions and disputations are carried on with great religious zeal; they go carefully into the minutest details of ritualistic ordinances, they criticise and speak for and against; and whoever can hold out longest with his arguments is reckoned to be the best scholar. As Muhtedi, *i.e.*, One brought to the truth, or properly, converted, they were particularly obliging to me, and all my remarks were applauded.

In the year 1859 I could take part in single disputes, and as my name was often mentioned in society, I soon received an appointment at the house of Rifaat Pasha, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, as teacher of history, geography, and French. This house not only ranked as the richest in the Turkish capital at that time, but it was also the rendezvous of Turkish *literati*, who, as fanatical adherents to old Asiatic culture, always gave the preference to Turkish compositions and literature; and when the young master of the house, Reouf Bey, gathered round him in the evening the celebrated Kiatibs (writers) and led the conversation to selections of Turkish authors, I literally revelled in the enjoyment of the marvellous metaphors and gems of oratory in the Osmanli language. History,

philosophy, and similar themes were not introduced into this circle, and as for politics the conversation was limited to the discussion of some elevation to a higher rank, or some official grant, on which occasions the high dignitaries then in office were always sharply criticised, for every one endeavoured to show up their faults by witty epigrams, or to prove their unfitness, corruption, and injustice in elaborate flowery language. So far the decorous evening assemblies. As for the merry gatherings, the so-called pot-evenings, of which I have spoken at large in my *Sketches of the East*, under the title of "Drinking Bouts," they were always objectionable and abominable to me, for I have never had a liking for spirituous drinks, and I have often had to sit for hours with an empty stomach, waiting until the grand gentlemen had finished intoxicating themselves with their Mastika (a kind of brandy) before the evening meal was served. The conversation on these occasions was coarse and vile in the extreme, and things were discussed freely and openly before young people which would have brought a flush of shame to the cheek in the most degraded of European society. In this it becomes apparent to the stranger of Western lands how beneficial is the influence of women on society in general, and that social amenity is incompatible with the rigorous separation of the sexes, as it is in the East, and must ultimately lead to moral corruption. To be nailed to one's chair for hours together, without

daring to move—for to show any restlessness is a breach of good manners—and to be obliged to listen to all sorts of disgusting stories, generally bearing upon sexual intercourse, and to trivial, childish, and absurd conversations, is of all things about the most terrible penance which can be inflicted upon a young, enthusiastic European striving after higher ideals. As long as the language still offered fresh charms, this torture was bearable, but afterwards these gatherings became a veritable infernal pain to me, and I was glad indeed when the winter was over and we adjourned to the summer residence on the banks of the Bosphorus, in the villa of Kanlidjia, where, at any rate, I was able to escape from the smoke-filled room and enjoy to my heart's content the fresh summer evening air on the Bosphorus, the loveliest spot on all the earth.

A prominent feature of the Oriental character is an extraordinary serenity and an easy-going, contemplative turn of mind. This same feature also evinces itself in family life. Being a stranger, I had access only to the Selamlik, *i.e.*, the men's part of the house, and I often felt very lonely in the daytime, and had plenty of time and leisure for my studies. The four years I spent in Turkish households were in many respects like life in a monastery, and it was not till later, when I had become acquainted with many prominent members of high society, that I could break the monotony by making

frequent calls, and bring some variety into my studies. Always welcome in one house as teacher, in another as friend and guest, I often used to spend two or three days a week outside the family where I really belonged. I had in these various houses my own Gedjelik, or night requisites; also a bed at my disposal, consisting of a cover and bolster and the use of a divan; and when I arrived anywhere at night it was taken for granted that I stayed the night and shared the evening meal. The hospitality of the Orientals, and especially of the Turks, is unbounded, and it is to them not only a pleasure but also a means of fulfilling one of the most sacred duties of their religion. Whether one or two more people sit down at his table makes very little difference to him, for there is always plenty to satisfy a few unexpected guests, and whether he be rich or poor, the Turk is always supremely happy when he has plenty of company at his table. But what struck me especially was the total absence of aristocratic pride and class distinction in social life. Vizier, marshal, minister, or son-in-law of the Sultan, all gave me an equally hearty reception, nobody asked after my antecedents, nobody inquired as to my circumstances, and I, who at home in the mother country had been an obscure Jewish teacher, living in absolute retirement, became now in the very short time of two years the confidential friend of the most distinguished and wealthiest dignitaries. As friend and guest initiated into all the mysteries of private

and official concerns, I soon became as learned and knowing as any Effendi born in Stambul and brought up under the Porte. Of necessity this privileged position in Turkish society brought me often in contact with European intelligence and the diplomatic circle at Pera. Besides the Austrian internunciature, where Baron Schlechta, whom I knew at Vienna, introduced me, I came into contact with the Prussian, Italian, and English Embassies. At the Prussian legation I taught Turkish to Count Kayserling, and at the hotel of the English Embassy I was introduced by Count Pisani, the first interpreter, to the then powerful Lord Stratford Canning, and I often acted as interpreter to him when he paid private calls at the house of Mahmud Nedim Pasha at Bebek. This man of the iron mien was not a little astonished when he heard me, the supposed Effendi, talk English fluently. My Turkish appearance, and the fame I enjoyed among the Turks of a thorough knowledge of their language, soon became the talk of the diplomatic circles at Pera. I was invited to *soirées* and public dinners, and thus received the first impressions of the social life of the West, the rigorous etiquette and stiffness of which was, honestly speaking, very objectionable to me at first.

The free access I had to all circles of Turkish society, where even native Armenians and Greeks comported themselves with a certain amount of restraint, gave me a deeper insight into the political

and social condition of Turkey in the fifties than perhaps any other European. And this was the more interesting as it revealed the first stage of the transformation from Eastern to Western civilisation. In the house, in the school, in the harem, in religion, and in government, everywhere a partly spontaneous, partly forced change became apparent, and, alas! it was this very first phase of the transformation which gave the thoughtful spectator but little hope as to the ultimate result of the metamorphosis, the assimilation of the East of Western ways. There was no sound basis to work upon, and the introduction of modern civilisation was forced on far too hastily, for the evident purpose of satisfying the craving impatience of the West. Wherever one looked, the eye met the deceptive, forced, and unreal evidences of the reform movement; it was merely obedience to the word spoken from high places; and even there, where the necessity of assimilation was acknowledged, a transition from East to West would eventually have failed. In my constant intercourse with the leading men of this movement I have often touched upon this theme, and, pointing out the tremendous difference between Asiatic and European civilisation, I have always advocated the necessity of a gradual progress, based on historical, religious and social developments.

But I was always met with the answer, "We are forcibly pushed on; they despise our centuries of

old Oriental culture, they want to change us, like a *Deus ex machinâ*, into Europeans; if they would only give us time, our transformation would be slower, but more effectual in the end."

And now, in view of recent events in Japan, these words are explained as a mere pretext for the laziness and the spirit of procrastination of the Moslem East. The fact is lost sight of that the Shinto faith of the Japanese, never at any time prudish like Islam, has never resisted the influences of European civilisation in the same degree as the triumphant doctrine of Mohammed has done. And what is more, one cannot or will not see that the intensely autocratic government of Moslem sovereigns hinders the work of modernisation as much as the liberal institutions of Japan further it.

When I think of those nightly assemblies at the house of my Pasha, where the most varied arguments were brought forward, for and against the new movement, I am particularly struck with the struggle which was going on between self-abnegation and the forcible ignoring of all the glorious past, which was inevitably connected with an acknowledgment of the advantages of Western civilisation. No nation likes to acknowledge of itself, "All that we have is bad, and all that others have is good." The number of Turks familiar with our languages and sciences was far too small to turn the scale in favour of a more correct view of the matter, and among the few who, on account of

their modern culture, were capable of a better opinion, personal ambition and rivalry frustrated many a good proposal. Reshid Pasha, who stood at the head, was a thoroughly well-bred, fair, and patriotic man; a statesman full of energy and perseverance, not hindered or hampered by any prejudices or prepossessions, honoured with the full confidence of his sovereign, and one who could have accomplished great things if his own pupils and assistants had not secretly opposed him, and thus frustrated many of his plans. The very able Ali Pasha, of whom Mr. Thouvenel, the ambassador of Napoleon III., said that he wrote better French than many a French diplomatist, was the paragon of Oriental intriguers and dissimulators. He was a small, weakly-looking man, with a disproportionately large head: hence his stooping posture; and in slow, hardly audible words he used to fling out the hardest criticisms against the politics of his master and patron, without being able to improve matters. When I was of the company, either at table or in the drawing-room, he used to steal furtive glances at me, and only after he had made quite sure of my discretion and considered me harmless, used he to speak somewhat louder to those immediately around him; but not until I had borrowed some Tchagataic books from his well-stocked library did he express himself without any restraint in my presence, in the full conviction that I, the philologist, took no interest whatever in poli-

tics. Yes, the hours spent in the villa of Kanlidjia, with the more than once Grand-Vizier and Minister of the Exterior, were most instructive to me; they gave me the first insight into the reform movement and the life and aspirations of the officials of the higher Porte in those days.

After Ali Pasha the personality of Fuad Pasha interested me especially. This tall, stately man, with refined, thoroughly European manners, who, with his sparkling wit and humorous *aperçus*, was more like a Frenchman than a Turk, and, as was generally known, had risen from being a simple military doctor to the highest State dignity, was now one of the three first reformers. Although fair and patriotic, he does not appear to have taken his position very much in earnest. He was complacency itself, but his sarcasm did not even spare the sacred person of his sovereign; and once, on the occasion of an illumination, when I happened to be in his suite, I heard him say, "Yes, it is light everywhere; darkness only reigns in our State cassa."

Many of his *bon-mots* are still in circulation; as, for instance, his remark to an inquisitive diplomatist, who, in going through the house, wanted to open the door of the harem: "Monsieur, vous n'êtes accredité qu'à la Porte—au delà vous n'avez pas de droit." It is told of him that when he was Ambassador Extraordinary at Madrid, and sat at table next to the Queen, who drew his attention to the emblem of friendship displayed on the Spanish-

Turkish flag on the ham, he said, "Madame! je reconnais volontièrement l'emblème de l'amitié — mais comme Musulman, je ne peux pas reconnaître la neutralité du terrain." In those days I managed to make quite a collection of his Turkish and French *aperçus* and poems, for he had inherited the poetic vein from his father, the celebrated Tzzet-Molla, who had had the audacity to write a satire against Sultan Mahmud, and for punishment had been banished to Köchük Tchekmedje. There he wrote his beautiful poem, "Mihnetkeshan" ("The Sorrowful"), in which the affectionate father recommends his two sons with rhyming names, Fuad and Reshad, to God's special protection. Fuad also gave his sons names that rhyme, for they were called Nazim and Kiazim. Fuad remained the lifelong, faithful friend of Ali, whose intellectual superiority he gladly acknowledged, without, however, altogether sparing him the darts of his sarcasm. Towards me Fuad Pasha was always most gracious, only he thought that my thirst for knowledge, without showing any practical results, rather resembled the craving of a hungry man for a glass of water, and he often quoted to me the Persian lines:

"Kushishi bi faide, vesme ber abrui kur,"
(*I.e.*, "It is vain labour to adorn the eye of the blind.")

Besides this trio of reformers—Reshid, Ali, Fuad—only very few have distinguished themselves since that time in the field of home and foreign

politics. The only exceptions are Mehemmed Kibrizli Pasha and Mehemmed Rushdi Pasha. The former, a Cypriote by birth, who had long been ambassador in London, was as enthusiastic about England as the latter was about France. Kibrizli's wife was an Englishwoman, and it would seem that he concluded this marriage anticipating the future annexation of his native island by the British Empire. In his politics he has given many proofs of independence, and was not nearly so amenable at court as his successor in the Grand-Vizierate. Rushdi Pasha, generally called Müterdjim (the interpreter), showed himself a Liberal even in my days, and afterwards, in concert with Midhat Pasha, took a prominent part in the dethronement of Sultan Aziz. I had access to the Konak of both, but because of my frequent attendance at the houses of Fuad and Ali they observed a certain degree of reserve with regard to me, without, however, being able to hide the tendency of the ruling spirit there. Of some importance were, even at that time, Aarifi Effendi, Safvet Effendi, and Server Effendi, who properly belonged to Ali's clique, and afterwards attained to the highest dignities. They were all zealous adherents of the reform party, fairly well advanced in Western civilisation, but none of them made of the stuff of which political leaders are formed. To the political amphibia belonged the then Minister of Finance, Hassib Pasha—a blind

tool of the court faction who allowed Sultan Abdul Medjid large sums of money far beyond the fixed Civil List; and when Fuad Pasha called him to book about this he replied, "The bank-note press was just in operation, and I thought a few millions more or less would make no difference." Then there was the War Minister, Riza Pasha, I might say, next to Fethi Pasha, the Grand Master of Artillery, the most powerful and influential man of his time, as he was related to the court, and moreover extremely rich, for he is said to have purloined enormous sums of money. Last, but not least, there was Mahmud Nedim Pasha, afterwards called Nedimoff because of his Russian sympathies. In his house I occupied for two years the position of French master to his son-in-law, slept there three nights a week, and even in those days took a dislike to this man who afterwards caused such harm to Turkey. He was a genuine specimen of the true Oriental, minus the goodly qualities which characterise the Turks. During his drinking-bouts, which lasted till long after midnight, he practised composing Sharkis (love-songs), and while he wrote down his verses under the inspiration of the Castalian Raki, his Mewlewi-Dervish had to play a suitable accompaniment on the flute. These songs were afterwards much liked by the ladies of the Imperial harem, and have probably contributed to his later influential position. As a politician he was nowhere, for his ignorance of

Western affairs was boundless; and when once I had to be interpreter on the occasion of a visit from Lord Stratford Canning to the villa at Bebek, where he was acting as substitute for the Minister of Foreign Affairs, I positively blushed when I had to translate his ignorant geographical remarks about the Suez Canal—the point under discussion. No wonder that Ignatieff could afterwards so easily gain this monster over to assist Russia in the overthrow of Modern Turkey.

Besides the above, I enjoyed the confidence and hospitality of Damad Kiamil Pasha, a worthy Turk of the old stamp, immensely rich, who, notwithstanding his hesitation between West and East, applied himself in his advanced age to the study of French, and was fond of me because in his attempts to translate Fénelon's *Télémaque* I had served him instead of a dictionary. He led a contemplative life in his villa on the bay of Bebek, and took great delight in my recitations of Turkish poems.

It would lead me too far to mention all the Turkish statesmen with whom I had personal intercourse and whose friendship I enjoyed. I had also made the acquaintance of the *literati* of the day—the historians Shinassi Effendi, Djevdet Effendi, and Khairullah Effendi, who very kindly assisted me, perhaps not so much on my own account as because of the high repute which the house of Rifat Pasha, and, later, of his son Reouf

Bey, of which I was then a member, enjoyed with the Porte. I love to think of those days. In spite of the threatening clouds of State bankruptcy and the general impoverishment, chiefly caused by the last Turko-Russian war, the Turkey of the fifties enjoyed a certain reputation in Europe; and as in our financial world the youngest member in the European Concert had received loan upon loan, Turkish society was rich, and on the strength of foreign money luxury grew apace. It was a period of childish carelessness and abandonment, in which both nation and ruler were plunged. Sultan Abdul Medjid, the true prototype of those days, was a kindly monarch, who gladly relinquished the cares of the State to his dignitaries, while he himself enjoyed all the pleasures of court life, and was a willing tool in the hands of the reform trio already mentioned, honestly trying, in outward form at any rate, to copy the European sovereigns. When at diplomatic dinners he handed his Havannah cigars to the European ambassadors, or offered his arm to a European princess who happened to be his guest, or when at solemn audiences he shook hands with the foreign representatives, he did so with all the grace of a perfect gentleman, and one could scarcely credit that only two generations ago the European ambassadors entered the audience chamber clad in a long kaftan, with a servant walking at each side of them holding their hands. His father, Sultan

Mahmud, still wore on State occasions a richly braided coat of Hungarian make, such as may still be seen among the costumes in the treasure-house. But Sultan Abdul Medjid dressed in a simple black suit made by Dusetoy in Paris, and when he appeared on horseback in the streets of the city, graciously acknowledging the greetings of the multitude with his white-gloved hand, no one would have recognised in him the earthly representative of Mohammed, the Khalif of all true believers, and the mighty autocrat of an empire still extending over three continents. In spite of all his refined manners, however, he remained the Oriental despot and autocrat. Whenever he showed himself in this light before Fuad or Ali Pasha the two statesmen made private comments about it in their own intimate circle. The Sultan's angry outbursts were faithfully reported, and once Fuad Pasha told how, when he had gently remonstrated with him in regard to advances from the public exchequer, the Sultan had accosted him with, "Am I not the true Osmanli ruler of this land, and owner of all its possessions?" Of course foreigners had not to fear such outbursts—towards strangers Abdul Medjid was always most courteous, and I like to remember the audience I once attended when, by order of the Grand-Vizier, Kibrizli Pasha, I acted as interpreter to an Englishman and an Italian, who came to offer for sale a supposed autograph letter of the Prophet, which had been found in

Upper Egypt, and for which questionable relic they received a large sum of money. The Sultan was seated at about five feet distance; he spoke in a low voice, and asked me whether all Hungarians could speak Turkish so easily. Most touching was his intercourse with Lord Stratford. He called him Baba (father), and was always willing to follow his advice.

A detailed narrative of all my experiences in Constantinople would fill several volumes. Suffice it to say that I had the satisfaction of knowing that in the diplomatic circles of Pera I was recognised as the only foreigner familiarly acquainted with the Porte and with Turkish family life. So I might well be satisfied with my lot. My income had considerably increased, and after the everlasting struggle with poverty, misery, and loneliness I had a proportionate degree of wealth, comfort, and fame; but, strange to say, I could not make up my mind as to my future career, and did not know in which direction I really wanted to go. For some time it had been my great desire to be an interpreter at one of the European embassies: to be an interpreter like those whom I saw honoured and feared at the Porte, riding on a high horse attended by servitors, and enjoying a certain amount of distinction in the Pera circles. But I never tried very hard to realise this ambition, for I knew that such a position could only be obtained through official connections with the Governments con-

cerned. It would have been far easier for me to get an appointment with the Porte itself, especially as I had been employed for some considerable time in the translation bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and through my connection with the highest dignitaries might have accomplished something, like, for instance, my former colleague, Murad Effendi (Werner), who, as is well known, ended his career as Ottoman ambassador at the Hague. I cannot tell why, but an official career in Turkey, an appointment in a State which was merely tolerated in Europe, had no attractions whatever for me. State officials are irregularly paid there, and absolutely dependent upon the whims of their superiors; advancement is not in any way dependent upon personal merit, and altogether such State service had no charm for me.

Possibly similar motives would have made me object to service in Europe also, for we too suffer from the same disease which has thrown Turkey on its deathbed; but because of my origin and lack of means I had never dared to think of any diplomatic appointment at home; and besides, I should probably soon have tired of even the greatest success in this department, for in the first place my unbounded sense of freedom could not in the long run have brooked any interference or subordination, and in the second place I was, and ever shall be, an incorrigible enthusiast and visionary, only delighting in the extraordinary; a man who,

running helter-skelter after empty phantoms, does not come to his senses and never knows what he really wants or can do. Perhaps some will say that these are the very people called upon to accomplish extraordinary things, and that with more reflection I might have shrunk back from many a mad enterprise. True; but one must not overlook the faults and mistakes of such ill-weighed, badly arranged steps; and the effects of these faults and mistakes I have often experienced during my travels and during my after-life!

The only consolation and refuge in all my complicated ambitions and aimless endeavours was, and remained always, a steady progress in my studies and the conviction that, true to my principle, accepted in early life, "Nulla dies sine linea," I had not one lost day to record. While I was perfecting myself in the acquisition of certain peculiar linguistic niceties, which only practice on the spot and constant intercourse can teach, and thus gradually becoming an accomplished Effendi, I had from the very commencement of my sojourn in Turkish houses set myself to the reading of Turkish manuscripts, and I had thus overcome the great difficulty of deciphering such manuscripts and also made rapid progress in the knowledge of Ottoman history. I had access to the libraries, and in the historical works which formerly I knew only by name I found so much that had reference to the history of Hungary that I intended to begin my

literary career by translating these. Besides this I made a study of the conversational language, and a Germano-Turkish pocket dictionary containing about 14,000 words, which was published in Pera, 1858, by Georg Köhler, was the first work with which I appeared before the public. It was also the first German book printed in Constantinople. To this purely scientific occupation I soon added public writing, as my constant and intimate intercourse with the political circles of the high Porte enabled me to obtain accurate information about the political questions of the day. Stambul, although only separated from Pera by the Golden Horn, is quite cut off from this centre of European life on account of the strong line of demarcation between the Turkish circles and Pera; and when on my daily visits to the European quarter I came into contact with politicians and journalists, I was looked upon and sought after as a source of information for the latest news and disclosures. I was surprised to see how little the Pera world knew of what was going on in Stambul; I hastened to enlighten the world by correct information, and became in this manner, without seeking or desiring it, reporter and journalist. I gained my first journalistic spurs with the *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung*, through its correspondent, a Prussian officer named Reiner. I sent in a few notes, which he inserted in his Correspondence. Later on I wrote letters under my Turkish name,

"Reshid," for the *Pesti Naplo* in Budapest, and instead of an honorarium I received only patriotic acknowledgments. When Vienna's attention had been drawn towards the originality of my Hungarian correspondence the *Wanderer* appointed me as regular correspondent. Amongst these many-sided occupations of teacher, historian, Softa, and linguist my studies regarding the origin of the Magyars were always uppermost. The mysterious origin of the Magyar nation and language, which to this day has not yet been explained, was a subject which ever since I began my linguistic studies had particularly interested me. It had taken hold of my youthful fancy also, because at school many tales and legends had been told us in explanation of it. The campaign of the warlike ancestors of the present Hungarians had at all times awakened in the hearts of the Magyars a peculiar interest in and sense of the poetic charm of lands of the interior of Asia, and behind the curtain which as yet hid the Steppe region of Central Asia (the supposed cradle of the Ural-Altaians at the time of the great migration to Europe) from the gaze of Europeans, the most wonderful pictures of national romance and inspiration were faintly discerned. When I beheld the grotesque Orientals of the interior of Asia this curiosity became naturally still more lively. The beautiful colouring of their ample robes, the stores of ammunition in their girdles, and their proud, dignified bearing must necessarily increase the

desire to claim relationship with these old-world types; and when I realised that the similarity between the Magyar and Turkish languages increases as we advance farther into the interior of Asia I could not help being convinced in my innermost mind that the *terra incognita* of Central Asia held quite unexpected surprises for me.

The real impulse for inquiring into the ancient history of the Magyar nation dates back to my boyhood. It was in the year 1849. I was sitting with my playfellows in a maize-field. It was harvest-time and shortly after the surrender of Fort Komárom. Some straggling Honvéds, mournful and of broken-down appearance, were on their way home after the conclusion of the War of Independence, and stopped their march in the field where we were, to tell us of their struggles, and their stories made us all feel very sad. An old peasant, the owner of the field, comforted us and said, "It will all come right. Whenever our nation is in trouble the old Magyars from Asia come to our rescue, for we descend from them; they will not fail us this time, you may be sure." "So there are old Magyars," I thought to myself, and ever since that time the idea has stuck to me. Whether it was an old tradition or a later historical legend is impossible to say, but it is a very remarkable fact that this old-world story after many centuries still lives in the national mind; the peasant who told it to us could neither read nor write and could only speak from hearsay.

It followed as a matter of course that as an outcome of my studies in comparative philology I hoped to find in Central Asia a few rays of light to guide me through the dark regions of primitive Hungarian history. The language of Central Asia, *i.e.*, Chagataic or East Turkish, was in those days known to us in the West only by the works of the French Orientalist, Quatremère. Judging from the relationship between the written and the spoken language of the Osmanlis, I hoped and expected to find among the idioms of the Steppes and of the town-dwellers on the other side of the Oxus linguistic elements which would show a pregnant resemblance and relationship with the Magyar language, and that in consequence I could not fail to make important discoveries and considerably help the solution of the origin question. The idea of a journey to Central Asia had been in my mind for many years; I thought of it incessantly and always tried to get into contact with the Mecca pilgrims who came to Stambul from the various khanates of Central Asia. On the other hand, I greedily devoured every scrap of Chagataic writing; and when I was admitted to the private library of the celebrated Ali Pasha, which was rich in this subject, my joy knew no bounds. The Turks themselves looked upon this curiosity of mine as a kind of literary madness. They could not understand how I, without position and without means, living from hand to mouth, could be so enthusiastic

about such an abstract, useless, ridiculous thing, and as the witty Fuad Pasha tried to cool my ardour by the remark already mentioned, other Turks kept reiterating, "Allah akillar versin," *i.e.*, "God grant wisdom," in order that I who have none may also obtain a little. The Turks, whose national feeling has only begun quite lately to show itself, content themselves with a queer mixture of Arabic and Persian. Real Turkish does not suit them at all; it is even considered plebeian, and of the relationship between their Turkish mother-tongue and the sister dialects of inner Asia they have but a very faint notion, if any at all. Curious as my study of the Turkish language seemed to them, my desire to travel in these remote and unsafe parts in order to gain more knowledge was absolutely incomprehensible to them. They simply thought me a maniac who, instead of soliciting the favour of influential and great men, so as to lead a pleasant and comfortable life, preferred to throw myself into the greatest dangers and privations, and who would certainly not escape them. Many shook their heads and looked compassionately at me; they even began to fight shy of me, and when my friends saw me in company with the ragged, half-naked pilgrims from Central Asia who often came to Stambul they turned away from me and declared that I was irretrievably lost.

I need hardly say that these deplorable signs of ignorance and absolute lack of higher ideals did not

in the least disturb me. My adopted Turkdom, my pseudo-Oriental character and nature were, after all confined to external things; in my inmost being I was filled through and through with the spirit of the West, and the deeper I penetrated into the life and thoughts of Asiatic society the more passionately and warmly did I cling to Western ideas, for there alone did I find the aspirations worthy of mankind, there alone could I see what was really noble and exalted. My resolve to tear myself away from the life at Stambul, which threatened to emasculate me, remained immovably fixed, and my plans were only somewhat delayed until the necessary travelling means should have been procured. The Hungarian Academy of Sciences had at that time, in acknowledgment of my literary work, made me a corresponding member of the institution; and when, after an absence of four years, I returned to Pest in 1861 to deliver my entrance address to the Academy, I told Count E. Dessewffy, the president, of my plans, and asked him whether the Academy would be able to give me some assistance for the journey. The Hungarian Academy was at that time not particularly well off, but fortunately one thousand florins had been put aside for scientific travels, and Count Dessewffy, an energetic, unprejudiced man, decided at once that I should have them on condition that I went into the interior of Asia to investigate the relationships of the Magyar language. His decision was at first

objected to by some of the members on account of my bodily defects and delicate looks, also perhaps because of the small sum at my disposal. They opposed in public session, but the Count remained firm; and when an enthusiastic craniologist wanted to commission me to bring some Tartar skulls for comparison with Magyar skulls, the Count replied, "Before all things we would ask our fellow-member to bring his own skull home again; thereby he will best fulfil the charge entrusted to him."

Little as was known in Europe of Central Asia in those days, my learned compatriots had not the remotest conception of these distant parts; finally, however, the national side of the undertaking carried the victory, and although most of the members considered it a great risk, they consented to it. They took leave of me with the warmest protestations of friendship, and in order to protect me against any danger they gave me the following letter of safe-conduct written in Latin :—

"*Magyar Academia.*

Academia Scientiarum Hungarica sub Auspiciis Potentissimi et Inclitissimi Principis Francisci Josephi II. Austriae Imperatoris et Hungariae Regis vigens.

Lecturis Salutem.

Socius noster Vir ingenuus honestissimusque Arminius Vambéry Hungarus eo fine per nos ad

oras Asiae Tartaricas mittitur; ut ibidem studio et disquisitioni linguae et dialectorum Turcico-Tartaricarum incumbat et sic nova perscrutandae linguae nostrae popularis Hungaricae, familiae altaicae cognatae adminicula scientifica procuret.

Omnes igitur Viros Illustres, qui literas has nostras viderint, quive, vel Rei Publicae administrandae in Imperiis Summorum Principum Turciae et Persarum praesunt, vel Legationibus Principum Europaeorum funguntur, aut secus amore literarum tenentur, rogamus obtestamurque, ut eidem Socio nostro Arminio Vambéry in rebus quibuscunque, quae ad promovendum eius scopum literarum pertinent, gratiose opitulari eumque benevola protectione sua fulcire velint.

Datae Pestini in Hungarica, die 1 Augusti anno mdccclxi.

BARO JOSEPHUS EÖTVÖS
(*Acad. Sci. Hung. V. Praeses*).
DR. FRANCISCUS TOLDY,
(*Acad. Sci. Hung. Secretarius perpetuus*)."

Seal.

The good gentlemen at home hoped that I should find this letter of commendation useful with the Khans in Turkestan and the Turkoman chiefs. It would have meant at least the gallows or the executioner's sword if I had shown this infidel writing either in the Steppe or on the Oxus!

Full of glorious expectations, I left Pest in 1861

to go to Constantinople for the second time. There I wanted to make the necessary preparations to enable me to start in the early spring on my wanderings through Asia Minor and Persia. The rate of exchange being so preposterously high, the thousand florins in Austrian bank-notes had dwindled down to seven hundred, and a stay of several more months in Constantinople further reduced my little stock of ready money. When in March, 1862, I went on board the Lloyd steamer *Progresso* to Trebizond, the girdle which I wore next to my skin contained only enough to take me as far as Teheran. Truly a risky undertaking, perhaps a mad trick, the danger of which I hardly realised just then. It was somewhat hard to part with all my kind Turkish friends in Stambul. These noble people did all they could to help me, and to postpone my certain destruction, as they thought, as long as possible. They advised me to go for the present only to Persia; and as the plenipotentiary and Turkish ambassador at the court of Teheran was at that time Haidar Effendi, an intimate friend of my patron, Reouf Bey, I received, besides the official commendation of Ali Pasha, also a collective letter from several distinguished officials of the Porte, in which they commended me, the poor demented one, to his kind care. Of my European descent, of the aim and object of my journey, not one word. I had to be Reshid Effendi only, and comport myself so as to tally exactly with my letter of introduction. I

durst not do anything else, for it was imperative that I should pass for a real Turk, an Effendi from Constantinople.

As for my state of mind when the critical moment of departure arrived, I was so excited that I hardly knew what I was doing. The dreams of my childhood, the visions of my youth, the Fata Morgana which had played before my eyes through all my rambles in the literatures of Eastern and Western lands—all were now nearing realisation, and my eyes were to behold all these wonders in bodily form. Anticipation drowned the voice of reason and common sense within me. What indeed could have made me afraid? After all, the dangers before me were but of a material nature—privation, fighting the elements, risk of health, sickness. Failure and death never entered into my speculations. And what were all these sufferings to me, who had had my measure full of them in my early years? Hunger I suffered in Europe till my eighteenth year. Insufficient clothing had been my portion from earliest youth. And as for sneering and scoffing, the poor little Jew boy had had to bear plenty of that with many other insults from his Christian playmates. Where was the difference between their derisive "Hep! Heps!" and throwing of stones, and the insults of the fanatical Shiites, or the suspicion of the Central Asiatics?

Human whims and weaknesses were indeed well known to me, and experience taught me that,

whether in the rough garb of the Asiatic or in the refined dress of the Westerner, men are much the same everywhere; nay, more, I have found more compassion and kindness of heart with the former than with the latter, and the terrible pictures which literature gives us of barbarian customs and dealings need not have discouraged me too much. There is only one thing which strikes me as rather remarkable in my firm decision to carry out my intention, and this is, that having once emerged from the school of misery and wretchedness, and having tasted the pleasures of good cheer and comfort, I should voluntarily return to the former. For in Constantinople, as already mentioned, I was getting on well the last few years—very well, in fact. I had a comfortable home, plenty to eat, even a horse at my disposal; and now I was going to exchange all that, of my own free will, for a beggar's staff. This perhaps is the only thing that can be counted to my credit.

But to what can not the sting of ambition spur us! And what is our life worth where this impetus, this source of all energy, does not exist or has become weakened? Material comforts, distinctions and dignities are but particoloured toys which fascinate us only for a time. True satisfaction lies in the consciousness of having rendered if only the smallest service to mankind in general; and what in all the world is more glorious than the hope of being able to enrich the book of intellectual life

which lies open before us, if only with one single letter! Such were my thoughts and feelings, and I found strength therein to face a thousand times greater dangers, difficulties, and privations than had hitherto fallen to my lot. I have often asked myself the question whether, apart from these higher, ideal aims, the thought of material advantages, *i.e.*, my future welfare, never crossed my mind. There would certainly have been no harm in this, but if material welfare had been my object its realisation would have been far less difficult and more certain of success if I had followed an official career at Constantinople, where I had influential patrons, and where I could have settled down in quiet pastures. No; my scheme was the outcome of my heated fancy, a mighty longing for the unknown and an insatiable thirst for adventure.

My Second Journey to the East

CHAPTER V

MY SECOND JOURNEY TO THE EAST

As I have published several books about this my second journey to the East, and as these, being translated into various languages, have become public property over the civilised world, I intend in these memoirs to touch only upon such points as are of a purely personal character, and could therefore find no place in the general accounts of my travels written for the world at large. And I want to lay particular stress upon such details as led to the gradual transformation of the Stambul Effendi into the confirmed Asiatic and the mendicant Dervish. In their light my many strange adventures will appear but the natural outcome of my career. This I consider the more necessary as it will enable my readers to note both the psychical transitions and the ethical and social influences to which the constant and intimate intercourse with the natives necessarily subjected me. It will help to show how, in a comparatively short time, changes

were effected which even I myself cannot quite account for.

After leaving the hospitable roof of Emin Mukhlis Pasha, the Governor of Trebizond, I continued my journey to Persia in the company of a small trading caravan. As I laboriously climbed up the Pontus mountain slope, and watched the sea gradually receding in the distance, a feeling of anxiety came over me, and for the first time I experienced that internal struggle between the craving for adventure and a sickening dread of the uncertainty and perilousness of my undertaking. It was springtime. The glorious scenery and the charms of nature all along the road as I ascended the Propontic mountain had well-nigh dispersed these dark forebodings, and my enthusiasm had almost gained the day. But when at night I had to put up at a dirty, loathsome caravansary, and after spreading my carpet on the bare floor, tired out as I was with my first ride, had to prepare my own frugal evening meal, the cold gravity of my position overwhelmed me, and I realised for the first time the awful difference between dark reality and rose-coloured imagination. My rice was burnt, the fat rancid, and the bread one of the worst kinds I had ever tasted in Turkey. My bed on the cold floor was anything but comfortable, and when, in spite of all, I fell into a heavy sleep, I had only the exhaustion after my first ride to thank for it. That

first long ride left its painful effects for two or three days. The stretch between Trebizond and Erzerum, a foretaste of the long ride to Samarkand, was altogether the most painful I have ever experienced; for in the first place I had to ingratiate myself with my fellow-travellers, mainly consisting of raw, dirty, fanatical mule-drivers, and, worst of all, I had to get used to the vermin with which every night's lodging swarmed. Arrived at Erzerum, where I enjoyed the hospitality of my former principal, Hussein Daim Pasha, who here occupied the position of military governor, I enjoyed a good rest. The kind-hearted man, an enthusiastic religious mystic, was firmly convinced of the pious motives of my journey to Bokhara, and both he and his adjutant, Hidayet Effendi, instructed me for hours in the mysteries of the various orders, and especially of the Nakish Bendi, to the grave of whose founder I was to make a pilgrimage. It was during my stay at this house that I witnessed quite an original use of superstition in the service of the law. One day the Pasha lost a valuable diamond ring, and as he had not been out of the house one might justly suppose that the ring would be found, unless one of the numerous servants of the establishment had made away with it. As all investigations were fruitless, Hidayet Effendi sent for a celebrated wonder-working Sheikh, who squatted down in the middle of the great entrance-hall, where all the servants were assembled. I impatiently waited the issue of events. At last the

Sheikh, sitting cross-legged, produced from under his mantle a black cock, and holding it in his lap he invited all the servants, each in turn, to come up to him, stroke the cock softly and straightway put his hand into his pocket; then, said the Sheikh, the cock, without any more ado, will declare who is the thief by crowing. When all the servants had passed in turn before the Sheikh and touched the cock, he told them all to hold out their hands. All hands were black, with the exception of one, which had remained white, and whose owner was at once designated as the thief. The cock had been blackened all over with coal dust, and as the thief, fearing detection, had avoided touching him, his hand had remained white, and consequently his guilt was declared. The servant received his punishment and the Sheikh his reward.

My sojourn in the house of the Pasha and in Erzerum generally, was very pleasant and comfortable, but hardly a good preparation for my further journey over the Armenian heights to the frontier of Persia, one of the most troublesome étapes of Asiatic travel. The poor Armenian houses, mostly underground holes, looking from the outside more like molehills than anything else, consist of one apartment in which the inmates live, crowded together with from ten to twenty buffaloes, and the first night I spent in company with these evil-smelling animals, tormented by smoke and heat and vermin, will ever remain vivid in my mind. The crisp morning air

of the high Armenian plateau acted like a tonic upon my weakened nerves. I felt supremely happy and drank in the pure, keen air with delight. One would like to shout for very joy if it were not for the constant dread of an attack by the Kurds who make their home in these Körogly passes, and are ever more keenly on the watch for small caravans than even for single travellers.

It was here on the Dagar mountains that I had my first encounter with the Kurdish robber hordes. It was my baptism of fire, but instead of filling me with enthusiasm, a deathly cold shiver came over me when at the request of my Armenian fellow-travellers I took up my pistol to act the protector. The precious bales of goods of the Armenian merchants had already been unloaded by the Kurds, and we stormed up the steep incline to call the robbers to account. Bravery, quick decision, and contempt of death are noble virtues, but one is not always born with them ; they have to be learned and practised. The bold front, the keen eye, and the blood coursing wildly through one's veins are all symptoms of valour, but they may also be those of a more or less reckless temper. Since that first episode on the Dagar I have in my subsequent travels often been exposed to attacks and surprises of various kinds, until at last I learned to face all dangers boldly, and had no more fear of death. But I still hold to my opinion, that heroes are not born but made, and that the most timid home-lover

can by a gradual process of compulsory self-defence become a very lion of strength and valour. Thus and thus only is produced that much-exalted virtue of personal courage and heroism. The pressing need of self-preservation is the real source of all heroism, and in the physically strong this psychological quality can hardly fail to show itself.

As I crossed the Persian frontiers at Diadin, and actually found myself in the land of Iran—the land which hitherto I had only viewed in the light of poetic fancy—the bare and barren wilderness which met my eyes added to my physical and mental sufferings, rudely tore away the last vestige of the glamour which my imagination had woven round this blissful spot. I was thoroughly disillusioned. Here I was, an Effendi, the greatest monster in the eyes of the Shiite Persian, in virtue of my antecedents, subject to scornful remarks, derisive laughter, and continually exposed to gross insults; for the Persians on their native soil are bold and audacious fanatics. As if I had not suffered enough of this in my early youth! The Hydra of religious fury now attacked and tormented me in a new form, and the "Segi Sunni!" ("Sunnitic dog!"), a variant of the "Hep! Hep!" of former days, resounded day and night in my ears. The villainy and knavery of the Persian merchants and Mollas were not less offensive than the stones thrown by the Christian street-boys and the invectives of the Catholic college instructors. But this trial also I

learned to overcome. Patience and endurance disarm the bitterest opponent, and when in a melodious voice and with strict Shiite modulation I recited a Sura from the Koran, or a passage from the Mesnevi, the sacred books common to both sects, their anger subsided and my fanatical fellow-travellers comforted themselves by saying, "He is not quite lost yet, he may yet grow to be a good Mussulman," *i.e.*, a Shiite. As will appear from the following pages of this work, it was for the most part religion, the product of Divine inspiration and the supposed means for ennobling and raising mankind, which made me feel the baseness of humanity most acutely; and from my cradle to my old age, in Europe as well as in Asia, among those of highest culture, as well as amid the crudest barbarism, I have found fanaticism and narrow-mindedness, malice, and injustice emanating mostly from the religious people, and always on behalf of religion!

Arrived on Persian soil, my material troubles and struggles were further enhanced by physical sufferings. I shall never forget the impression made upon me by the furtive looks of anger and disdain cast upon me by the Persians I met in the streets or in the bazaar of Khoi. The national language is Turkish there, but as soon as I opened my mouth my pure Stambul accent at once betrayed my Sunnitic character. This ill-will is a retribution for the insults and the chicanery to which the Shiite strangers in Turkey are exposed, but I could not help asking

myself, "What have I done to these people? Have I in any way aided in preventing Ali from succeeding to the Prophet?" But all speculations and arguments were useless. I came in the character of an Effendi, and the profound disgust which this word awakens in the Shiite mind accounted quite sufficiently for all the insults I had to bear. Even for money these fanatics would scarcely sell me anything. The question arose whether Sunnites, like Christians, were to be accounted *nedjis*, *i.e.*, unclean, whom to touch is a sin; and it was only after prolonged and violent discussions that I could pacify their scruples on this point. If there had been a livelier intercourse between Turks and Persians I should probably have had less to suffer, but I was the first private Osmanli who, for many years, had travelled in Persia, and therefore I must take weal and woe into the bargain. I was surprised to find that the women were far more vehement in their expressions than the men; many spat at me as they passed me on the road, giving expression to their hatred by pithy oaths. Truly woman everywhere is more passionate than man! Thanks to my excellent health and vigour, still further improved by abnormal physical exertions, I was able to cope with these mental distractions. I even enjoyed the excitement of them; and when at Tebris, in the Emir caravanseray, I had for several days been an attentive spectator from within my little cell, of the mad carryings-on of the Persian traders, craftsmen,

beggars, Dervishes, buffoons, singers, and jugglers, I felt that I was gradually being transformed into an Oriental, and that my existence as a poor traveller was quite bearable. Exchanging my semi-European dress, piece by piece, for the long, wide Persian garments, I gradually accomplished the metamorphosis of my outward appearance; I was no longer conspicuous in a crowd. Once, as I was loitering about in the courtyard of the caravanseray, I noticed among the bargaining groups collected round the loaded and unloaded beasts of burden a European, who while unpacking his bales was evidently at a loss for a Turkish word. Impatiently he turned over the leaves of a small octavo volume, and I was not a little amused to recognise in it my own Turkish pocket dictionary printed in Pera many years ago. When the merchant (he was a Swiss, a Mr. W., commission agent at Tebris), after a fruitless search, put the little book impatiently aside with no very complimentary remarks, I suddenly addressed him in German, remarking that the writer of his little dictionary was not exactly a fool, only that he had been looking in the wrong place. To be addressed in German by a ragged semi-Turkish, semi-Persian individual in the bazaar at Tebris was a little too much even for the equanimity of this son of Mercury. We exchanged a few words, reproaches and irritation were followed by apologies, and the end of the comical intermezzo was an invitation to

his house and lavish hospitality for a few days. Amusing adventures of a similar nature befell me on other occasions, and it was always and everywhere my linguistic skill, and the ease with which I could reproduce foreign accents, intonations, and constructions, and in many instances quote suitable maxims and passages of the Koran, accompanied with the usual gesticulations, that took with my audience, and made me pass for a native in spite of my foreign physiognomy.

I had noticed this with pleasure on the banks of the Bosphorus, and more still on the first part of my journey in the interior of Asia. I could not say that I was proof against all suspicion, for the typical expression of the face always excited doubt, and was detrimental to me, but in the variegated national mosaic of the West Asiatic world, where types and races of all zones meet and mix in ever-varying amalgamation, there language is everything and looks nothing; and when this language, moreover, expresses respect for Allah and the Prophet, one becomes incorporated *de jure et de facto* in the all-encompassing bond of religious community, and one ceases to be a foreigner.

And so my stay at the caravanseray of Tebris was full of curious impressions and incidents. Sitting in my poor, bare little cell, I watched for hours together the confused bustle of the bartering, wrangling, shouting, singing, begging crowd in the court. Sometimes I went out among them, spoke

to one or another, talked about trade in its various branches, and in the evening hours when it was comparatively quiet in the caravanseray, sometimes, when I could not get out of it, I joined in the conversation about sectarianism, politics, and other matters. The merchant of the East is always a man of the opposition, for he has much to suffer from anarchy and the *régime* of absolutism, and his open criticism has often surprised me.

After a prolonged stay in Tebris, I found myself at last in the saddle again on the way to Teheran. The future appeared more hopeful, and the success of my undertaking somewhat more certain. Instead of travelling in the usual caravan I had joined a company of travellers who, although natives of Sunnitic lands, Kurds and Arabs, wandered all over Iran in Shiite disguise. Religion was their business—that is to say, they travelled from village to village singing elegies (Rouzekhan), and daily shed bucketfuls of tears in the commemoration of the tragic fate of the martyrs Hasan and Husein, and then, after pocketing the shining gold pieces, the disguised Sunnites laughed in their sleeve. Another kind of these religion-traders occupied themselves with the expediting of Persians, both living and dead, to the holy shrine at Kerbela. To the former they served as guides on their pilgrimage, getting as much as they could out of them, and secretly conniving with the marauding Beduins, who attacked and stripped them of all they possessed. The

latter, *i.e.*, the departed faithful worshippers of Ali, are transported by them between four planks to Kerbela and Nedshef. In my *Wanderings and Experiences in Persia* I have attempted to describe such a funeral caravan. It is the most awful and gruesome spectacle imaginable, but it is a profitable trade; and when I travelled in company with these gentlemen expeditioners, elegy-singers, and Kerbela-pilgrims, I came to the conclusion that the juggling of the pious in East and West, amongst Christians and Mohammedans, is all the same. Here as there the maxim holds good: "*Mundus vult decipi—ergo decipiatur*," only that the felicity of being deceived is in Asia far more intense than with us in Europe.

In Asia the light of civilisation and revelation has as yet illumined but a few. Scepticism has always been timid in the world of Islam, even in the time of its glory, and now that poverty and misery reign supreme, and the struggle for existence is almost the only thing thought of or cared for, there is but little desire for metaphysical speculations; people have no time for meditation, and conform with cold apathy to the old prescribed forms of faith.

In spite of the oppressive July heat, in spite of occasional nightly attacks, or rather intimidations by robber bands, I arrived full of good courage in the Persian capital; and after I had somewhat recovered from the fatigues of the journey at the

Turkish Embassy in the cool valley of the Shimran mountains, no one was happier than I when the cooler weather set in, and, leaving luxury and comfort behind, I was able to resume my adventurous route to South Persia, *i.e.*, to Ispahan, Shiraz, and Persepolis. This journey formed, so to speak, the second course of my preparation for the expedition into Central Asia, and if I had not gone through this course I don't know but that my perilous expedition into Turkestan would on the whole have been a failure. When I arrived in Teheran I was greeted with the discouraging news that a journey to Bokhara was fraught with gigantic and unconquerable dangers, and not by any means so easy as I had imagined, and, moreover, that in the North-East of Persia, because of the war between Dost Mohammed and Ahmed Shah, the journey *viâ* Meshed and Merv or *viâ* Herat had become perfectly impossible. So I was obliged, in order to avoid further inactivity, to find another opening and a new field of labour. As the study of the Aryan languages was not at all in my programme, there seemed no object in my going to South Persia. But I durst not break off the hardening system I had commenced, and I had already grown so fond of the excitement of venturesome expeditions that the dry saddle, dry bread, and dry soil were more to my taste than all the luxury, riches, and wealth of the hospitable Turkish Embassy. The kind reception I had met with there secured

for me, in the Persian capital, the half-official character of an attaché to the Embassy. I gained admittance to the houses of the aristocracy, and was also presented to the King, and when ready to start for South Persia the Persian Government gave me the following letter of commendation :—

"The State officials of the glorious residence as far as Shiraz are hereby notified that the high-born and noble Reshid Effendi, a subject of the Ottoman Government, who has come to travel in this land, is now on his way to the Province of Fars. On account of the friendly relations between the two States, and also because of the harmony prescribed by the common Moslem religion, all officials of those regions are hereby instructed to see that the traveller above mentioned receive all due honour and respect; to protect him on the journey and at the different stations against all injuries and molestations.

"Mirza Said Khan
"(*Minister of Foreign Affairs*).
"Teheran, 24th Safar, 1279."

Considering the very small consideration which even the very highest official commands receive in the provinces, I did not attach overmuch importance to this letter. It has, however, protected me occasionally against suspicion.

In Ispahan and Shiraz I could, in my character of

Stambul Effendi under State protection, obtain a much more intimate knowledge of the land and the people of Persia than falls to the lot of any other European. I particularly enjoyed my stay at the house of Imam Djumaa of Ispahan, the Shiite high priest at that time, to whom I was a regular problem, and who tried in vain to penetrate my incognito. This cunning and most skilful man, who exercised great influence, gave himself much trouble to convert me to the Shiite sect. Evenings for disputations were organised, in which learned Shiite Akhondes (priests) and Mollas unpacked all the paraphernalia of their sectarian learning for my benefit; they entered into the minutest details to prove the correctness of Shiite dogmas and rites, they marshalled a whole army of arguments to prove the usurpations of the first Kalifs, Abubeker, Osman, and Omar, and Ali's irrefutable right of succession. As I had often been present at similar discussions in the opposite—that is, in the Sunnitic—camp, I was not afraid to put in a word to the point here and there; but when, very closely pressed, I was at a loss for an answer, my opponents rejoiced, and in overcoming me, the disguised European, they fancied they had conquered all the Sunnites. Poor fools! what would have been their feelings if they had known that through contact with a Frenghi they had become Nedjis, *i.e.*, unclean, and that they had taken all this trouble over a declared enemy of all positive faith. In my

intercourse with the lower classes these discussions were not carried on in quite so pleasant a manner. During the long caravan journey I was never free from their impertinent questions; whether on the march, resting, eating or drinking, they challenged me, and left me no peace. Even in the coolness of the night, when I had fallen asleep seated on my slowly-trotting donkey, I was often roughly roused and accosted with such remarks as, "Now, then, do you mean to say that this mangy dog, called Omar, this hideous, infernal beast, this stinking vermin, was not a usurper? Answer, Effendi, for I tell you I have a great mind to send you down to the infernal regions after your dirty patron-saint."

Thirteen hundred years have passed away since first the spirit of mastery and boastfulness began to wage this barbarous, destructive war in the name of religion—a war which has led to the shedding of oceans of blood, and cost mountains of wreck and ruin. And here was I, a harmless wayfarer, a follower of Voltaire and David Strauss, rudely roused from my peaceful slumbers and forcibly dragged into stupid arguments! It was too bad!

Indeed, my visit to South Persia, with all its glorious monuments many thousand years old, with the graves of Hafiz and Saadi, cost me very dearly. In my book about Persia I did not mention a tenth part of all the sufferings, all the privations I had to bear, and yet, in spite of all, I experienced intense

joy during this expedition. Every modulation of the beautiful South Persian dialect, the sight of the glorious monuments of Iranian antiquity, made my bosom swell and wrapt me in a world of delicious dreams. Never shall I forget the night of my arrival at the ruins of Persepolis. It was bright moonlight, and I stood for hours, transfixed in silent wonder, gazing at the gigantic monuments of ancient culture. Then the evenings spent in company with Persian literati, at Hafiz's grave, with music and song and the pearly goblet in our hands, or the solemn moments of pious meditation in Saadi's mausoleum, shall I ever forget them?

Apart from these intellectual enjoyments of a peculiar nature, the journey to and from Shiraz, which lasted for several months, had considerably hardened me, and given me a quite extraordinary elasticity. I could brave wind and rain, heat and cold, without the slightest risk; I slept in the saddle as on the softest bed, I rode on any kind of saddle-beast over hill and dale; nay, I took special pleasure in horsemanship—a thing which, considering my lame leg, is now incomprehensible to me. I swung myself into the saddle of a horse in full gallop, I mounted high-loaded mules and camels as if I had been brought up with rope-dancers, and I felt safe in company with the roughest specimens of humanity as if I had lived all my life with vagabonds and robbers. Under these conditions it is not surprising that, on returning from South Persia, I

stuck to my resolution to undertake the journey to Bokhara, if necessary *viâ* Herat and right through the Turkoman Steppes, and that all the words of advice, warning, and intimidation of European and Turkish friends at Teheran were fruitless, and left me perfectly unmoved. I thought to myself, "What can befall me worse than what I have gone through already?" I had long since discarded the character of the poor Effendi in which I had commenced my travels, and, without being conscious of it, I had adopted the part of a roving Dervish, for Dervish is the name applied to all Orientals who have not run after earthly goods, but lead a roaming life in search of adventure, with religion as their sign-board. Now, whether I begged my bread in Persia, in the character of a Dervish, in the daytime wandering about in tatters, and at night in the Tekke (convent) singing hymns, to while away the time, or whether I did the same in Middle Asia, came to much the same thing. On the contrary, I thought in the latter portion of the Islamic world, where I can move more freely and probably get on better as Osmanli amongst Sunnites and Turks, better days may (possibly) be in store for me; instead of torments and insults and scorn, I may find honour and liberal hospitality; and so strong was my confidence in the success of my undertaking that I began to have a perfect longing for Central Asia. It was rather amusing to see the way in which the Europeans at Teheran viewed my resolution, and how

the opinion gained ground that I had fallen into a fatal delusion, and that, unconscious of danger, I was hurrying on to certain destruction. The tragic end of the English officers, Conolly and Stoddart, who died a martyr's death at Bokhara, was then fresh in everybody's mind. Monsieur de Blocqueville had not long since returned from his Turkoman captivity, and the frightful details of his experiences as prisoner under the Tekke still resounded in our ears. Stories were told of the mysterious death of an English officer, Captain Wyburn, who had suddenly disappeared on the Turkoman Steppes, and not a trace of whom could be found. Other imaginary atrocities were conjured up, and it seemed only natural that everybody did his best to dissuade me from my purpose, and to paint a journey into the very centre of Moslem fanaticism in the most glaring colours. Curiously enough, my friends at the English Embassy discouraged me less than any; and, pointing to the travels of Burnes and Dr. Wolff, Mr. R. Th. thought that I might have a chance of success. Count Gobineau, the French Ambassador, himself a literary man and Orientalist, gave me but little hope; my success would not please him, for he was filled with envy and jealousy. They were most put out at the Turkish Embassy, where I had been so warmly recommended by the Porte, and where they were really anxious about my fate.

I was not at all loath to leave Persia; what

charm could a longer sojourn in Iran have for me? A description of the political and social conditions of this land, already sufficiently well known even in those days, offered no special attraction to my literary vanity. True, the instructive and classical works of Dr. Polak and Lord Curzon of Kedleston had not appeared yet, but I could not have written anything absolutely new about Persia. In my intimate intercourse with the people of the land I was principally struck with the more intensely Oriental character of the Government and society, and all that I saw strengthened me in my conviction that Persia was at least a hundred years behind Turkey, notwithstanding the greater intellectuality of the people, and would certainly take longer to extricate itself from the pool of Asiatic thought. Of the West and Western culture they had but very vague notions in Persia. The young king, Nasreddin Shah, was instructed by his court physicians, Cloquet, Polak, and Tholozan, in many points of our Western culture, and he took a good deal of trouble to mould his surroundings upon their suggestions. The prudish conservatism of the Orientals, supported by the national pride and boundless vanity of the Persians—who, recollecting the age of the Sasanides and the glorious period of Shah Abbas II. always try to minimise the triumphs of our civilisation, or even hold it in derision—hindered all healthy and vigorous progress. Even the heads of the adminis-

tration very seldom knew French. In my frequent intercourse with Mirza Said Khan, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, a native Persian of the old school, I often received amusing proofs of this ignorance and obstinacy. He lacked even the elementary knowledge of the geography and history of Europe, and all that I told him of the power and might of some of the European States was nonsense in his eyes, and he used to say reproachfully "If Europe is really so great, why does it want to enrich itself by commerce with Persia, and why does it force itself upon us?" Mirza Yahya Khan, the first adjutant of the king, who knew French and was somewhat enlightened by his travels in Europe, used to laugh aloud at the ignorance of the minister; but even he allowed the West but few prerogatives, and always boasted of the greater intellectual endowments and sagacity of the Persian people in general. With the scholars and literati I could not get on at all. Referring to their truly beautiful literature of antiquity, they used to speak with poetic ecstasy about the superiority and unequalled beauty of Eastern thought, and were especially proud of their philosophers. "If your thinkers are really so great and sublime," I was often told, "why then do you translate our Sadi, Hafiz, and Khayyám? We have no desire for *your* classics." These people are happy in their Persian microcosm, and I well recollect the disputations I used to have with the Akhondes (learned). These thickly turbaned priests

struck me as being remarkably liberal-minded in religious matters. They spoke about Mohammed and his doctrine without any fanaticism, from a purely historical point of view, and did not appear shocked at the most daring hypothesis or suggestion, which surprised me very much, for amongst the Sunnites of Turkey and Central Asia such discussions would have been called blasphemous.

Looked at from this point of view Persia was highly interesting to me, and if I had not had my mind full of plans for travel I could perhaps have turned the advantage of my incognito to better account by a comparative study of individual Oriental nations. But it was no good, I was compelled to go forward; and while in this excited frame of mind I accidentally made the acquaintance, at the Turkish Embassy, of some Tartar pilgrims on their way back from Mecca to Central Asia. When I acquainted the members of the Turkish Embassy with my intention to travel in company with these frightful-looking people, half-starved, tattered zealots, covered with dirt and sores, one can imagine the surprise of those kind-hearted folks. The ambassador, Haidar Effendi, a particularly high-minded man and extremely tolerant in matters of religion, was quite upset about it. He threatened to use force; but when he saw that all his expostulations had not the slightest effect upon me, he did his utmost to minimise the danger of my undertaking. He called the leaders of the

beggar-band before him, gave them rich presents and recommended me to their special care and protection; he also gave me an authorised passport, bearing the name of Hadji Mehemmed Reshid Effendi, with the official signature and seal. Seeing that I had never been in Mecca, and had therefore no legal right to the title of Hadji (pilgrim), this official lie may be viewed in various lights. But it saved my life, and I owe my success to it; for this pass, in the critical moments of my journey incognito, supplied the necessary documentary evidence. The official document bearing the Tugra (Sultan's signature) is at all times an object of pious veneration to the Turkomans. They recognise in the Osmanlis their brethren in the faith, and the simple children of the Steppes came from far and near to behold the holy Tugra, and after performing the prescribed ablutions, to press the sacred sign against their brow. In Khiva and in Bokhara, where the official sign was better known, it elicited still more respect. In fact, I may honestly say that I owe my success to this passport; and when one considers the magnanimous tolerance which must have prompted these Mohammedan dignitaries and representatives of the Sultan to describe a European and a freethinker as a Mussulman pilgrim, I think the deception may be condoned. An official of humane Christian Europe would scarcely have shown as much generosity to a Mohammedan! After Haidar Effendi, I found another kind friend in

Dr. Bimsenstein, an Austrian by birth, who acted as physician to the Legation at Teheran. He seemed much concerned about me, but when he saw that even his fatherly advice was of no avail, and that the prospect of a martyr's death did not frighten me, he called me into his dispensary and gave me three pills, saying, "These are strychnine pills. I give them to you to spare you the agonies of a slow martyr's death. When you see that preparations are being made to torture you to death, and when you cannot see a ray of hope anywhere, then swallow these pills; they will shorten your agony." With tears the kind-hearted man gave me the fateful globules, which I carefully hid in the wadding of my upper garment. They have been my sheet-anchor, and many a time when in moments of danger I felt the little hard protuberances in the wadding, I have derived comfort from them. My valuables consisted of a silver watch, the face of which had been transformed into a Kiblenuma, *i.e.*, a compass, or more correctly, an indicator or hand to show the position of Mecca and Medina, and a few ducats, hidden between the soles of my shoes, which I only had occasion to extricate twice during the whole of my journey. "Cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator." So I was safe against the greed of my fellow-travellers and any other robbers. I wore my very oldest Persian clothes, and in every respect made myself as much as possible in outward appearance

like my beggarly companions. So I started on my adventurous expedition with a cheerful mind, and turning my back upon Teheran, the last connection with European memories, I set my face towards the Caspian Sea.

And now in the evening of my life,—the glow of enthusiasm vanished, and heart and head cooled down almost to freezing-point,—looking back upon this wild folly of my younger days, I cannot but condemn the whole affair as absolutely unjustifiable and opposed to all common sense. The first part of my plan and its execution were not matters of calculation and premeditation, but a leap in the dark, a rushing forward at random. I quite forgot to consider whether my physical strength would hold out in the unusual struggle, and whether with my lame foot I should be able to get over large distances *per pedes apostolorum.* Also I had not sufficiently taken into account the suspicion of Central Asiatic tyrants, and forgot that Bokhara was not only a hotbed of hyperzealous fanaticism, but also of the most consummate villains in the world. I had not the faintest idea that I should be watched day and night by numerous spies, reporters, and officious hirelings, who followed me in the lonely Steppes, in the bazaars, the streets, the mosques, and the convents, and took note of every word, every movement of mine. I never thought that my European features would at once attract attention among the masses of pure Ural-

Altaic and genuine Iranian type, and form a permanent suspicion against me ; and least of all did I think that, notwithstanding my versatility, my well-tempered nervous system, and my experience in the morals and customs of Islam, prying eyes were always busy trying to look through my incognito. I had had no idea of the fiendish cunning and subtilty of the Bokhariots, and the frightful crudeness of the Osbeg court at Khiva. How could I have known all this, seeing that these countries and people, cut off for centuries from the other Islamic States, and perfectly unknown to Western nations, still continued in the stage of ancient almost primitive culture and ignorance, and had nothing in common with the civilisation of the Turks, Persians, Kurds, and Arabs, with whom I was familiar? With every step I took into this strange world my astonishment and surprise and also my fear grew. I realised that I had entered into a perfectly strange and unknown world of ideas, that I had undertaken a most risky thing, that my former experiences would avail me nothing here, and that I had to gather up all my strength to escape the dangers on all sides. The preservation of my incognito was a tremendous mental and physical exertion. As for the former, I could not and dare not relax for one moment during the whole of my journey; by day or by night, asleep or awake, alone or in company, I had always to remember my *rôle*, be ever on my guard, and never

by the slightest mistake or neglect betray my identity. I used mostly at night, when all were asleep round me, to practise certain grimaces and contortions of eyes and face, I tried to imitate the gesticulations which in the daytime I had observed from my travelling companions; and so great is human adaptability to foreign customs and habits that within two months I was in fashion, manners, and speech a faithful copy of my Hadji companions, and in the eyes of ordinary Turkomans passed for a regular Khokandian or Kashgarian. Of course my poverty-stricken and dirty appearance greatly assisted the delusion. In the seams and cracks of the face sand and dirt had collected, and formed quite a crust, which could not be removed by the prescribed ablutions, for the simple reason that as we were often short of water in the Steppe, I had to take refuge in Teyemmun, *i.e.* (a substitute), washing with sand. My beard grew rugged and coarse, my eyes rolled wilder, and my gait in the awkward full garments, perhaps also because of my frequent and long rides, had become as unwieldy, waddling and uncomfortable as if I had lived from early youth with Mongol and Turkish tribes. I cannot and need not hide the fact that at first these physical discomforts were very irksome to me, and cost me many a pang. To dip one's fingers into a pot of rice, which for want of fat is cooked with tallow-candle, and in which the Tartars plunged their filthy, wounded fists, cannot

exactly be described as one of the most pleasurable methods of feeding, nor is it a treat to spend the night squeezed in among a row of sleeping, snoring beggars. Both are equally undesirable, but when in these predicaments I recalled the sufferings and privations of my early life, the comparison made me realise that the European mendicant has much the advantage over his Central Asiatic comrade, for the sufferings of hunger, thirst, and vermin are far worse in Turkestan than they ever could be in Europe.

What I had to suffer from this last evil, the lice, which multiply in the most appalling manner in Central Asia, passes all description, and, objectionable as the subject may be, I must try to give some idea of the manner in which I endeavoured to rid myself of this pest, if only for a short space of time. With the Dervish the catching of these insects forms part of the toilet, and is also looked upon as a kind of after-dinner enjoyment. One begins by using the thumb-nails as a weapon of defence against these intruding guests; and the picture of various groups engaged in search and slaughter was sometimes intensely ludicrous. In the second stage of the cleansing process the garment under treatment is held over the red-hot cinders, and the animals, stunned by the fierce heat, die a fiery death with a peculiar crackling noise. If this *auto-da-fé* is not procurable, the garment is strewn all over with sand, and exposed to the scorching rays of the sun. The vermin are thus

invited to exchange their lower cooler quarters for the upper warmer ones, and once there they can easily be shaken off. When neither fire nor sand is available the garment is placed near an ant-hill, and the troublesome insects are left to the mercy of the ants, who soon make their way into the smallest crevices and apertures and carry off their prey. Curiously enough, this pest is far worse in winter than in summer, for when, on my journey between Herat and Meshed, I lay huddled up in one corner of my bed, these creatures, always in search of heat, collected wherever the heat of my body was greatest, and no sooner had I turned from the right on to the left side, than these detestable animals at once instituted a formal migration and took possession of the heated portion of my body. Now I understood for the first time why in the Jewish Holy Scriptures the plague of lice is mentioned second after that of the water turned into blood. Next to this plague I suffered much from the fatigues of the journey. First of all there was the scorching heat on the plain of the Balkan mountains up to the Khiva oasis, where the thermometer, as I learned afterwards from the reports of Colonel Markusoff, rises fifty and fifty-two degrees Réaumur, and where the lack of drinkable water causes the traveller unheard-of sufferings. One inhales fire, so to speak, the skin shrivels visibly, and one is almost blinded by the vibrations of the air. From eight o'clock in the morning till

three or four in the afternoon it is like being in a baker's oven, and the torture is aggravated when one has to sit huddled together and cross-legged in the Kedjeve (or basket) on the back of a camel, stinking of sweat and sores. Sometimes, when the poor beast could go no farther through the thick sand, I had to climb down from my perch and go for long distances on foot. On account of my lame leg I had to lean on a stick with my right hand, and on one of these tramps my right arm became so terribly swollen that I suffered great pain for several days. Apart from these inconveniences, I enjoyed excellent health, which rather surprised me, as the half-baked bread freely mixed with sand, the best we could make in the Steppes, was apt to be somewhat indigestible. So much for the magic effect of an outdoor life and the excitement of an adventurous expedition!

And yet all these physical sufferings were light as compared with the mental and nervous strain I underwent. Every look, every gesture, every sign, no matter how innocent, and even in the circle of my most intimate friends, I viewed with apprehension, lest it might contain some hidden allusion to my incognito. I tried to hide my anxiety behind the mask of exuberant hilarity, and generally managed to lead the conversation on to some irrelevant subject. But I found out afterwards that these harmless folks never dreamed of unmasking me. In their absolute ignorance of Europeanism they

had never for a moment doubted the genuineness of my Effendi character. Fortunately, precautionary measures were only necessary when I was in a town, in Bokhara or Samarkand, for amongst the country folks and the nomads, the latter of whom had never seen a European face to face, they were quite superfluous. The successful preservation of my incognito among these simple children of Nature made me indulge in the wildest flights of fancy. I remember one mad idea, the impracticability of which did not at all strike me at the time, but which must now seem ridiculous to everybody, even to myself. I had reached the height of my reputation with the Turkomans of the Gorghen and the Atrek. They looked upon me as a saint from distant Rum (the west); young and old flocked round me to receive a blessing, or even a sacred breath, as a preservative against diseases. One day an old grey-beard, who had spent his whole life in plunder and murder, discreetly advanced towards me, and in all earnest made me the following proposition: "Sheik-him (my Sheikh)," he said, "why do you not place yourself at the head of a great plundering expedition? Under your blessed guidance we might organise an attack on a large scale into heretic Shiite (Persia). I am good for 5,000 lances; steeled heroes and fiery horses could do much with Allah's help, and assisted by a Fatiha (prayer) from you." Now the reader will naturally suppose that I treated this proposal as a huge joke. Nothing

of the kind. The words of the old Turkoman wolf did not sound at all absurd to me; they only required a little consideration. I thought of the unexampled cowardice and state of confusion of the Persian army, and knowing the wild impetuosity, the rapaciousness, and the audacity of the Turkomans, one of whom was a match for ten Persians, the thought flashed through my brain, "Stop, why not undertake this romantic exploit? All the way from Sharud the Persian frontiers are exposed; 5,000 Turkomans can easily take the field against 10,000 Persians and more. And where will the Shah find so many soldiers all in a hurry? In Teheran I shall find some adventurous Italian and French officers who will probably like to join me. In any case an attack upon the capital can be successfully accomplished, and who knows, I might possess myself of the Persian throne if only for a few days!" The fact that it would be no easy matter to keep 5,000 Turkomans within the bounds of discipline, and that in the face of European politics my success would at best be but a midsummer night's dream—all this troubled me not one whit; so deeply had I plunged into the atmosphere of mediæval life around me, and so far did my heated fancy carry me back into the regions of past ages!

In places where my incognito had to stand the test with people who, on their journeys through India and Turkey, had come into contact with

Europeans, I had the hardest battle to fight, and was often in great danger. There I was not treated with the humble reverence and admiration which is due to a foreign Hadji and divine. On the contrary, they questioned me about my nationality, the aim and object of my journey, and even the fittest and readiest answers could not banish their suspicion and doubt. In this respect my adventure with the Afghan on the journey to Khiva will ever remain vivid in my mind. He was a Kandahari who, during the British occupation of 1840, had escaped the English criminal law; he had spent some time in the Afghan colony on the Caspian Sea, and afterwards had wandered about for many years in Khiva. He would insist that, in spite of my knowledge of the languages of Islam, I was a disguised European, and therefore a dangerous spy. At first I treated him with every possible mark of respect and politeness; I flattered his vanity, but all in vain. The scoundrel would not be taken off his guard, and one evening I overheard him say to the Kervanbashi (head of the caravan): "I bet you he is a Frenghi or a Russian spy, and with his pencil he makes a note of all the mountains and valleys, all the streams and springs, so that the Russians can later on come into the land without a guide to rob you of your flocks and children. In Khiva, thanks to the precautions of the Khan, the rack will do its part, and the red-hot iron will soon show what sort of metal he is made of." Never to

move a muscle under such amiable discourses, or to betray one's feelings by any uneasy expression in one's eye, that mighty mirror of the soul, is, in truth, no easy task. I managed, however, to preserve my cold indifference on this and similar occasions; but one evening, during our passage through the Steppe, the Afghan was quietly smoking his opium pipe in the night camp. By the glimmer of the coals on his water-pipe I met his dull, intoxicated gaze, and a diabolical idea took possession of me. "This man is planning my destruction, and he can effect it; shall I throw one of my strychnine pills into his dish of tea, which he is even now holding in his shaky hand? I could thus save myself, and accomplish my purpose." A horrible thought which reminds one of Eugene Aram in Bulwer's novel. I took the pill from the wadding of my cloak, and held it for some time between my fingers close to the edge of the dish. The deadly silence of the night and the opium fumes which held this man under their spell seemed to favour my devilish scheme, but when in my distraction I gazed upwards and saw the brilliantly shining canopy of heaven, the magic beauty of the stars overmastered me; the first rays of the rising moon fell upon me—I stayed my hand, ashamed of meditating a deed unworthy of a civilised man, and quickly hid the fateful pill again in the lining of my Dervish cloak.

The continuance of my dangerous position eased

my task in some respects, and custom makes many things bearable. Practice had taught me to sit still for hours, immovable like a statue, perhaps just moving my lips as if in silent prayer, while the spies sent to Bokhara to find me out, freely discussed my identity, and speculated upon the enigma of my nationality and my faith. The danger of growing red or pale, or of betraying my internal struggle by a look, had long since ceased for me. I had so thoroughly accustomed myself to my character of pseudo-Dervish, that the emotions connected with the pious demeanour of those individuals came quite spontaneously to me. When my companions of the Steppe consulted the oracle of stones or sticks about the issue of our dangerous campaign through the Khalata desert, I stooped down as curious as the rest, and watched the configuration of the stones or sticks as anxiously as the superstitious natives. They had even assigned to me a greater power of divination than to any of the others, and hearkened diligently to my explanation. When, arrived at the grave of the native saint, Bahaeddin, near Bokhara, we performed the customary prayers, I could hold out with my fellow-travellers from eight in the morning till late at night. I prayed, sang, shouted aloud, groaned, and raved in pious contrition with the best of them. I wonder even now whence I procured the uninterrupted flow of tears which I shed on those occasions, and how I could play my part in this comedy for hours together with-

out betraying the slightest emotion or perturbation. I must confess that Nature has endowed me with a fair dose of mimicry, a quality which Napoleon III. once in a conversation commended me for. From my earliest youth I had learned to imitate the outward expression of various kinds of people; thus I had accustomed myself to wear alternately the mask of Jew, Christian, Sunnite, and Shiite, although any form of positive religion was objectionable to me. I believe, however, it was not so much my mimetic faculty as the instinct of self-preservation and the consciousness of ever-present danger which enabled me to bring my venturesome experiment to a satisfactory end. The fear of death is at all times a hideous beast, which glares at us and shows its teeth, and although one may get used to its presence in course of time, and even become blunted and hardened, yet this monster, fear of death, never quite loses its influence over us, and if we are blest with a strong nervous system, we can in the face of it do almost impossible things.

It would lead me too far were I to dwell here upon some of the exciting and critical incidents of my incognito, examples of which have been given in my earlier works. It has often been laid to my charge by conscientious critics that I have been too reserved, too brief, in the accounts of my travels. So, for instance, the learned Jules Mohl writes[1]: "M. Vambéry est un voyageur singulièrement modeste,

[1] *Journal Asiatique*, March–April, 1865, p. 371.

qui ne raconte de ses aventures que ce qui est indispensable à son histoire, et l'impression que donne son ouvrage est, qu'il ne raconte pas tout ce qui lui arrive." In my *Sketches of Central Asia* I have entered a little more into details, but even they are far from exhaustive. The compass of an autobiography is likewise too small for this. Self-glorification does not please me, and where I have occasionally been a little more circumstantial in my narrative, it has been for the purpose of lessening the surprise which my incognito travels called forth in Europe, by showing the reasons for and the natural effects of certain things. Many well-disposed critics even have doubted the verity of some of my experiences, which to the European *pur sang* are simply incredible. But those who have read the story of my childhood and early youth, who realise that up to my eighteenth year I hardly ever knew what it was to have enough to eat, that I went about insufficiently clothed and exposed to miseries of all sorts, will not see in my adventures anything so very marvellous. From a very early age I have had to act contrary to my inner convictions; in religion, in society, in politics, I have often had to pretend in order to attain my object. Nothing is more natural than that when in Central Asia I had to fight with want and distress, with perplexities of every form and shape, I should come out victorious. No European before me has ever attempted to assume the incognito of a mendi-

cant friar, for Burckhardt, Burton, and Snouck Hurgronje in Mecca, Wolff and Burnes in Bokhara, and Conolly in the Turkoman Steppes, travelled as Asiatics with plenty of means, or in an official character. Few, no doubt, have had such bodily fatigues to bear, but few, perhaps none, of my colleagues have gone through such a hard school in their tender childhood. The conventional modesty of scholars and writers has always been irksome to me, for virtue in the garb of a lie is disgusting. I speak quite openly and honestly when I say that my adventures in Central Asia will appear little remarkable if regarded as the continuation of my experiences in Turkey and Persia on an intensified scale; and these latter, again, were in form and character closely allied to my struggles and trials as a little Jew boy, a mendicant student, and a private tutor. I have often been asked how I could bear the constant fear of death, and if I were not sometimes overcome by the thought of certain destruction. But one can accustom one's self to a life in constant fear of death as well as to anything else. It has disturbed me only when the crisis came all too suddenly, and I had no time to collect my thoughts and plan means of escape. Such was the case when, in the Khalata Steppe, I was near dying of thirst, and being in a high fever I swooned. Then, again, at the time of my audience with the Emir at Samarkand, one of the court officials touched the nape of my neck, and remarked to his

companion, "Unfortunately I have left my knife at home to-day," which may have been quite a casual remark. On the whole I have preserved my equanimity, nay, even my cheerfulness, in the most critical moments, for high-spirited youth does not easily give way to despair; it has a store of confidence which only disease or age can diminish.

The Return to Europe

CHAPTER VI

THE RETURN TO EUROPE

I HAD now become thoroughly accustomed to my *rôle* of mendicant friar, and the severe physical and mental exertions I had undergone should have prepared and fitted me for a yet more serious journey of discovery. And yet, strange to say, when I heard at Samarkand from my Kashgar travelling companions that it would be no easy matter, nay, practically impossible, for me to proceed to Khiva—because of the political disturbances there—I was not altogether sorry. The frustration of my plans was unpleasant, but I was not inconsolable. The fatigues I had undergone had affected me to such an extent that the prospect of an overland journey to Peking and back across the Kun-lun to India did not strike me as quite so delightful as it had done before. To tread in the footsteps of Marco Polo, and to return home illumined by the aureole which surrounded the great Venetian; for me, a lame beggar, to have accomplished the greatest overland journey of modern

times—all this had stimulated my ambition for a while, but a tired, weary body affects the spirit also, ambition becomes languid and in default of this most energising medium the desire for action also fails. After I had escaped from my dangerous adventure with the Emir of Bokhara, and my fellow-travellers had committed me to the care of a company of pilgrims on their way to Mecca, I realised for the first time what a fortunate escape I had had, and my thankfulness rose in proportion as I left Samarkand behind and approached the south-west of Asia. I speak of deliverance, but as a matter of fact on this return journey I laboured under the same constant sense of suspicion, perhaps even in an increased measure ; and was exposed to all the miseries of the approaching rough season and the perceptible coldness of my new travelling companions. Now, indeed, I had to drink the last dregs of my cup of suffering; now I experienced the bitterest and most painful moments of the whole of my journey ; for what I suffered from hunger, cold, and exhaustion between Samarkand and Meshed surpasses all description, and would scarcely be credited by European readers.

The population of the stretch of land between the Oxus and Herat forms, as far as their culture is concerned, a kind of medium between the Moslemic-fanatical Bokhariots and the partly or wholly nomadic, in some things still primitive, tribes of Central Asia. These people are harassed on the

one side by the tyrannical arbitrariness of their Government, and on the other by the lawlessness and rapacity of the dwellers of the Steppes. Great and pressing poverty and distress of every description have crushed all human feeling and faith out of them; and when the pilgrims passing through now and then receive an obolus from them this is not due to any pious motives, but entirely in obedience to the ancient laws of hospitality. My beads, talismans, benedictions, and similar baubles were of no use to me here. These people had a look as if they wanted to be good, but could not, and I, with not a penny in my pocket, was often nearly driven to distraction. What were the times of starvation at Presburg, or the miseries of an empty stomach in the wretched house of the Three Drums Street in Budapest, compared to the sufferings and the forlornness on the way south of the Oxus? The only pleasant memory left to me of those days is the kindness I received from Rahmet Bi, a trusty chamberlain, and afterwards Minister to the Emir of Bokhara, in Kerki on the Oxus, which has since become Russian. This man, of whom more later on, seemed to have guessed my incognito, and for some time could not make up his mind whether to betray me or to follow the promptings of his kindly heart. The latter triumphed; but to this day I do not know how or why. At any rate he quieted the suspicions of the Governor of Kerki on my account, and helped me safely over the

frontiers. If I am not mistaken, the poetic Muse had a hand in Rahmet Bi's friendliness towards me. He sometimes wrote Persian verses, and was delighted when he could read them to me and gain my approbation.

Among the warlike, rapacious, and wildly fanatic Afghans I have never found a trace of any one like Rahmet Bi. He not only treated me with marked friendliness during our sojourn in Kerki, where he had a mission to the Ersari Turkomans, but he also gave me a letter of safe-conduct in Persian for eventual use in Central Asia. As a curiosity I here insert this document in the original with translation:—

Text.

"Maalum bude bashed ki darendei khatt duagui djenabi aali Hadji Molla Abdurreshid rumi ez berai Ziareti buzurgani Bokharai Sherif we Samarkand firdus manend amede, buzurganra ziaret numude, djenabi aalira dua kerde baz bewatani khod mirefte est. Ez djenab Emir ul Muminin we Imam ul Muslimin nishan mubarek der dest dashte est. Baed ki der rah we reste bahadji mezkur kesi mudakhele nenumude her kudam muwafiki hal izaz we ikram hadji mezkuna bedja arend. Nuwishte be shehr Safar 1280 (1863)."

Translation.

"Be it known, that the holder of this letter, the

high-born Hadji Abdurreshid, from Turkey, has come hither with the intention of making a pilgrimage to the graves of the saints in noble Bokhara and in paradisiacal Samarkand. After accomplishing his pilgrimage to the graves of the saints, and having paid homage to his Highness the Emir, he returns to his home. He is in possession of a writing (passport) from his Highness the Sovereign of all true believers and the Imam of all Moslems (the Sultan); it is therefore seemly that the said Hadji should not be inconvenienced by any one, neither on the journey nor at any station, but that every one as he is able should honour and respect him.

"Written in the month of Safar, in the year 1280."

Thus I was safe on Bokharan soil, and also on the journey through Maimene up to the Persian frontiers. From there, however, and for the rest of the way, I was constantly watched with Argus eyes, and had to endure the most trying fatigues. During my stay at Herat, which lasted for several weeks, I had to sleep in the shivering cold autumn nights on the bare ground, and in the literal sense of the word begged my bread from the fanatical Shiites or the niggardly Afghans, who frequently instead of bread gave me invectives, and often struck me, the supposed Frenghi, or threatened me with death. Even now I shudder when I think of the vile food

on which I had to feed and the angry looks these people cast upon me, whom by command of the young Emir they dare not insult, but whom they hated from the bottom of their hearts.

When I think upon the Ghazi attacks in North India, so frequent even in our days, in which some fanatical Afghan calmly murders the harmless Englishman he happens to come across, simply to gain paradise by killing a Kafir, it seems a veritable marvel that I escaped with my life. Every Afghan who came past my cell glared at me with angry eyes. To shoot me would have passed as a virtue, but fortunately their anger did not vent itself in deeds.

This secret wrathfulness manifested itself most strongly on the journey from Herat to Meshhed, when the hard-hearted Afghans, wrapped in their thick fur-coats, took a special delight in seeing me spend the night in my light clothing without any covering, hungry, and with chattering teeth. In spite of all my sufferings and privations I did not give way however, but, regardless of hunger and cold, I always remained cheerful, and I attribute this chiefly to my excitement at the successful accomplishment of my adventure, for once on Persian soil I expected to be safe from all danger.

The charm of this consciousness was so strong and effective that for days together, both after my arrival at Meshhed and on the tedious marches

through Khorasan, I lived in a constant fever of excitement; and the farther the horrible spectres of past dangers dwindled away in the distance, *i.e.*, the nearer I came to Teheran, where I should find the first European colony, the louder throbbed my heart, and the more vivid became the enchanting pictures of future renown on the rosy horizon of my fancy. Whether this joyous excitement was proportionate to the actual results of my adventurous enterprise, and whether the reward was worth all the trouble, I never stopped to consider then. It was enough for me that I was the first European to have advanced from the south coast of the Caspian Sea through the Hyrcanian desert to Khiva, from there through the sandy plains of the Khalata to Bokhara, and from thence to Herat. I knew that the specimens of the East Turkish languages and the manuscripts I had collected were unknown to the scientific world of Europe, and would give me the character of an explorer and specialist in Turkology, and finally I was not a little proud of the manner in which I had travelled, always under the impression that my intimate intercourse with the various tribes of inner Asia, so far but little or imperfectly known, must yield an abundant harvest of ethnographical knowledge. Indeed, had I been a professional philologist and linguist, trade, industry, and politics, geography as well as ethnography, could not have captivated my attention to the same extent, and I could not have obtained all

this practical knowledge of inner Asia, keenly interested as I was in the destiny of these far-away nations. If it had struck me that, owing to my very deficient education, much had been neglected and passed by unnoticed, that, for instance, I had not a notion of geology, and was absolutely useless on geographical grounds; that I could not have rendered any assistance in these, even had I had the knowledge, because I only carried a little bit of pencil hidden in the lining of my coat, and consequently that my services to geography and natural science in general were of the vaguest and most problematic character—had I realised all this the temperature of my exultation would have fallen considerably. But all such thoughts remained down at the bottom of the ocean of my bliss; and so now, after an existence of thirty-one years in this world, for the first time in my life the golden fruit of realised success and the sweet reward after hard labour beckoned to me from the distance, and filled me with ecstasy and blissful anticipation. The long, weary stretch from Meshhed to Teheran I accomplished in mid-winter; two horses were at my disposal, for the Governor of Meshhed, Prince Hussam es Saltana, had furnished me with the necessary means, and throughout all this journey my mind was full of joy and anticipation. My Osbeg attendant, who from Khiva had accompanied me, and through weal and woe had been faithful to me, was not a little surprised at this metamorphosis

in my behaviour. For hours together I used to sing songs or airs from favourite operas, which the good lad took for holy hymns of the Western Islam. He was highly pleased to see the Dervish of the West in such a pious frame of mind, and often as I warbled my operas he accompanied me in his nasal tone, fully under the impression that they were Moslem songs of praise or pious hymns. Such a duet has not often been heard, I believe. Thus it came about that during the four weeks occupied by this ride from Meshhed to Teheran—a ride which exhausts even the most hardened traveller—I was always full of good-humour. Physically I was worn out, even to the extent of being unrecognisable, but mentally uplifted and full of elasticity when I made my entry into the Persian capital.

The kindly reception accorded me in Meshhed by Colonel Dolmage had shown me that in Asia Europeans are not separated by any national wall of partition, but, united in a common bond of Western fraternity, share each other's weal and woe; and on my arrival in the Persian capital I was still firmer convinced of this bond of unity. The news of my fortunate escape from the hands of the Central Asiatic tyrants had been received by all the European colony with equal pleasure. Young and old, rich and poor, high diplomatists and modest craftsmen—all the Europeans in Teheran, in fact—wanted to see and to welcome

me; and few could repress their sympathy when they saw the gay and lively young Hungarian of former days so sadly changed and fallen off. From my letter to the Turkish Embassy, written in the Turkoman Steppe, they had heard of my safe arrival in this dangerous robbers' den. But after that no further intelligence had been received. No wonder that in the Persian capital the wildest rumours about my imprisonment, execution, and miserable end were circulated and believed. Pilgrims from Middle Asia, who confused my identity with that of some Italian silk merchants captured in Bokhara before my arrival there, related the most horrible details of the martyr's death I had undergone. Some had seen me hanging by my feet; others declared that I had been thrown down from the tower of the citadel; others again had been eye-witnesses when the executioner quartered me and threw my limbs to the dogs to eat. As Bokhara was known to be the hotbed of the most consummate barbarities and cruelties, these tales were easily believed by the Europeans in Teheran, and now, on my return, hale and hearty, but with the indisputable marks of excessive sufferings upon me, every one's sympathy went out to me. All strove to show me attention and to please me in some way or other. The various Legations invited me to festive dinners. The English Envoy, Sir Charles Alison, asked me to write an account of my travels, and gave me

official recommendations to Lord Palmerston, Lord Strangford, Sir Justin Sheil, Sir H. Rawlinson, and other political and scientific notabilities in London, which were of great service to me, and largely influenced my further career. M. von Giers, then Russian Ambassador at Teheran, and afterwards Imperial Chancellor, urged me to go to Petersburg, because he thought that my Turkestan experiences would be most appreciated on the Neva. At the Russian Legation they drew a picture of my future career in the most brilliant colours, and when I pointed out that life in those severely autocratic spheres would be incompatible with my nationality and political opinions, these diplomatists came to the conclusion that I was too naïve, and, in spite of the hard school I had gone through, still remained an enthusiast.

Teheran, indeed, was the centre of important decisions for me. Had I listened to the persuasions of the Russians, who knows what position I might not be occupying at present in the administration of Turkestan? Of course it was out of the question for me to turn my footsteps northward. All the treasures and all the glory of the Czar's dominions would never help me to conquer the feeling of dislike which from a child I had had against the oppressor of my fatherland and all its national policy, the personification of despotism and unbridled absolutism. With all the more readiness I accepted the introductions given me by

the English; for this nation, with its glorious literature and liberal ideas, had long since become dear to me; and as, moreover, in the East I had found them the only worthy representatives of the West, it will seem quite natural that in Teheran I had already made up my mind what course to pursue in Europe, and made London the final aim of my journey to the West.

At Teheran I rested for about three months from the fatigues of my Central Asiatic expedition. During that time, and while it was all yet fresh in my mind, I completed and supplemented the pencil-notes secretly taken on the journey and written on odd bits of paper in the Hungarian tongue, but with Arabic characters to avoid detection. I even mapped out an account of my travels, which I intended to publish in England. I built the most delightful castles in the air, and revelled in the glorious colouring of the pictures of my imagination, without, however, having the slightest conception of how to create for myself a decided career built upon solid foundations. It was enough for me that I had become acquainted with districts and places in the Asiatic world which no European before me had ever set eyes on, but how and where I was to turn this knowledge to the best account never once entered my mind in the excessive joy of my successful campaign. And I could not in any case have come to any satisfactory conclusion on this head, for, in the first place, I was not quite sure yet

as to the best ways and means of disposing of my knowledge; in the second, I was somewhat doubtful as to my literary accomplishments; and in the third, I had not yet made up my mind in which language to write.

In the tumult of my exultation the one certain, joyful prospect that rose up before me was that my successful expedition would gain me European fame and honour, and secure for me a position in life, but of what nature this position was to be I knew not, and cared not. All I wanted was to get to Europe now as soon as possible; first go home to Hungary and report myself to the Academy at Pest, and then place the account of my wanderings before the European public.

As soon as the fine weather set in I left the Persian capital to return to Trebizond by the same way by which I had come, viz., Tebriz and Erzerum. Full of anxiety, apprehension, and uncertainty as my journey here had been, equally full of joy and delightful anticipation was my journey back to the Black Sea. In quick day marches I passed the different stations. The formerly toilsome journey was now mere child's play to my body inured against fatigues. It was an exciting pleasure-ride which the warm reception of my European friends in Tebriz made into a veritable triumphal march. Warm welcomes, banquets, laudations, and undisguised appreciation of

my adventure were my greeting. Swiss, French, Germans, English, and Italians—all were proud that a lame European had actually been amongst the kidnapping Turkomans and the wildly fanatical Central Asiatics; and glad that through his discoveries this hitherto obscure portion of the Old World was brought within the reach of Western lands. Besides the account of my journey which I had sent from Teheran to the President of the Hungarian Academy, the diplomatic representatives at Teheran officially acquainted their various Governments with my doings, and sent off innumerable letters to European newspapers. The fame of my successful expedition thus preceded me, and when I came to Constantinople I was presented to the Austrian Internuncio (Count Prokesh-Orten) and the Grand-Vizier (Ali Pasha), who both seemed to know all about me. Their warm reception and the lively interest they manifested in the concerns of the hitherto closed districts of inner Asia showed me their appreciation of the work I had done. After my late experiences, Constantinople, where I delayed only for a few hours, seemed to me the flower of Western civilisation. I went by one of Lloyd's steamers, *viâ* Kustendji-Czernawoda on the Danube, to Pest, where I arrived in the first half of May, 1864.

I shall not attempt to describe my feelings at sight of my beloved fatherland. My pen would be unequal to interpret the emotions which I ex-

perienced as I trod once again the soil of the land for which I had undergone so much. It was to find out its early history that I had first been induced to start on this dangerous expedition ; for, as already mentioned, the national beginnings of my native land had from my earliest youth stirred within me a feeling of curiosity, to satisfy which I had faced the dangers and privations now safely over. Arrived in Pest, I left the boat at the Suspension Bridge and, accompanied by the Tartar whom I had brought from Khiva as a living proof of my sojourn in foreign parts, I sped towards the Hôtel de l'Europe. My joy knew no bounds, and it never struck me that my home-coming was just as lonely and unobserved as my departure had been some years ago. When in after years I witnessed the receptions granted in London to Livingstone, Speke and Grant, Palgrave, Burton, and, above all, to Stanley—receptions in which the whole nation took part, of which the newspapers were full weeks and months beforehand, a special train meeting the traveller, who was feasted as if he were a national hero—and when I saw how even in Vienna, where travellers as a rule are not the heroes of the day, officers like Payer and Weyprecht were celebrated on their return from the North Pole—it pained me to think upon my own gloomy, lonely home-coming, and the lamentable indifference of my compatriots. Even in the circle of the Academy, whose delegate I had been, my successfully accomplished

undertaking seemed to rouse no interest; for, when at the next Monday's meeting, I entered the hall of the Academy only the noble, highly-cultured secretary, Mr. Ladislaus Szalay, and my high-minded patron, Baron Eötvös, warmly embraced me and expressed their pleasure at my fortunate escape. They indeed did all they could to make up for the neglect of the others. Hungary was just then passing through the sad period of Austrian absolutism. The nation languished in the bonds of this autocracy. There was no sign of public life or social vitality. Every one's hopes and expectations were fixed on the restoration of the national Government and the reconciliation with Austria; and although Asia, from the historical point of view of the old Magyars, might be of some interest, geographical and ethnographical researches and the opening out of the hitherto almost unknown portion of the old world could have no special attractions for Hungary just then. He who longs for bread requires no dainties to tempt the palate, and a nation sorely troubled about its political existence and its future can scarcely be blamed if all efforts are in the first place directed towards the regaining of its constitutional rights and national independence, and if it pays more attention to culture and the improvement of science in general than to geographical and ethnographical discoveries in distant lands.

At the time of my home-coming Hungary had reached but the first stage of internal administration.

The Academy, the only national institution which had escaped the Argus eye of absolutism, had rather a political and national than a purely scientific character, and the society desirous for the restitution of its constitutional rights naturally felt more drawn towards the enlightened, more advanced nations of Western lands than towards the obscure districts of the Oxus and their inhabitants. Even in Germany, the home of strictly scientific pursuits, my travels had attracted less attention than in England and Russia, where both political and commercial interests directed the attention of the Government towards these regions, and where a more intimate knowledge of those hitherto inaccessible regions seemed urgently needed.

Therefore, to be perfectly fair and honest, and allowing for the all-pervading interest in the political questions of the day, I had perhaps very little or no cause at all to feel hurt at the coldness and indifference shown to my travels, or to see in it an intentional non-appreciation of my services. But in my despondency, and with the still vivid memory of my reception by the European colonies in Persia and Turkey, a more sober, dispassionate view seemed impossible, and I broke down altogether. The first days of my stay in Pest were bitterly disappointing. I said to myself: "Is this the reward for all I have gone through, all I have suffered? is this the gratitude of a nation in quest of whose origin I have risked my life? this

the appreciation of the Academy which I trust has been benefited by my researches?" Thus rudely awakened out of the happy dreams which had been my companions on the homeward journey, I felt bruised and hurt, and my vanity was wounded. To see those beautiful pictures—which my fancy had conjured up, and which had cheered and encouraged me under the greatest privations and in hours of peril—thus mercilessly shivered and dispelled, was indeed one of the most painful experiences of my life. For hours together I brooded over this in my lonely room in the Hôtel de l'Europe. I would not and could not believe that it was actually true, and the wound was all the more sore and irritating as I found myself, after all these years of struggle and exertion, in exactly the same position as before—that is, I was no nearer the solution of the question how to secure a position for myself.

Some advised me to resume the official career I had abandoned in Constantinople; others suggested that I should apply for a professorship in Oriental languages at the Pest University, which would be the easier to obtain since the position of lector had become vacant through the death of Dr. Repiczky. The former of these suggestions was not at all to my taste, for after my adventures, the East had but little attraction for me. Even when on the spot and at the very source of Oriental thought, and beholding the steady decay of the Asiatic world, I clung the more passionately to the

energetic life of the West. The professorship seemed a little more attractive, as, before all things, I longed for rest, and I hoped in that capacity to find leisure to work out the linguistic and ethnographical results of my travels. Unfortunately the procuring of a professorial chair in those days was beset with grave difficulties for me. Hungary was ruled from Vienna, and in that centre of administration I, being on intimate terms with the Hungarian emigrants of the East, and never having felt much sympathy for Austria, could hardly expect to find friends and promoters of my interests.

So neither of these two suggestions seemed practicable; and as my English friends in Teheran had advised me to publish the account of my travels in London, and to this effect had liberally supplied me with introductions to different ranks and classes of society in the British metropolis, I soon made up my mind to go to England, and to appear before the London Geographical Society, the best known forum of Asiatic travel. Possibly another reason also induced me to decide upon this plan. After a four weeks' rest the desire for travel was again upon me, and the hopelessness and weariness of my existence made me long for change and adventure. I decided to go, the sooner the better, and, turning away from the field of Eastern vicissitudes, to plunge into the full stream of Western life and action. Very well; but this also was more easily said than done. Travel in the East requires but a knowledge of the

languages and the customs, while money is more often dangerous than helpful ; but in the West it is just the reverse ; and as I had come to Pest devoid of all means, I had a great deal of trouble in collecting the necessary funds to defray my travelling expenses to London. The bitterness of my feelings was not improved thereby. In vain I asked my supposed friends for a small loan, in vain I promised fourfold repayment, in vain I pointed out the advantages which my appearance in the cultured West would confer upon the nation ; deaf ears everywhere. The coolness with which my various travelling experiences were received raised doubts in many minds. Ignorance is the mother of suspicion, and as many people thought my adventures fantastic and exaggerated no one cared to advance me any money ; and there I stood in my native land more forlorn and helpless than in the wildest regions of Central Asia.

Thanks to the intervention of my noble patron, Baron Eötvös, Count Emil Desewffy, President of the Academy, was at last persuaded to advance me a few hundred florins from the Library Fund of the Society—a helping hand indeed in my sore necessity, if only that hand in taking me by the arm had not left behind black stains which for ever have disfigured this deed of charity. The money was given me on condition that I should deposit my Oriental manuscripts, the treasured results of my travels, with the president, and praiseworthy as

this precaution and zeal for the property of the Academy on the part of the noble president may seem, it had a most injurious and mortifying effect upon me. When I took my bagful of manuscripts to the Count's house I could not help remarking, "So you do not believe me; you take me for a vagabond without any feeling of honour; you think that I take the money of the Academy and do not mean to pay it back—I who have been slaving and suffering for the good of the Academy as few have done before me, and who now as the fruit of my researches want to see the Hungarian nation—hitherto almost unknown on the world's literary stage—recognised as a fellow-labourer in the great harvest field of European culture! I, the fanatical enthusiast, have to give a guarantee for a paltry few florins!" No, it was too much; I felt grievously hurt and my patriotism had been deeply wounded. One may imagine that I was not in the most amiable frame of mind as I left the city for which I had yearned so many years, and if the hope of recognition in England had not buoyed me up, the black spectre of disappointment would have been still blacker. And, I ask the kind reader, was it strange that I began to think that all this humiliation and mistrust, all this cruel misapprehension, and this wilful ignoring of all my trouble and labour was due to my obscure origin and the ill-fated star of my Jewish descent? This hypothesis may possibly be a mistaken one, for I believe that true

Magyar explorers of Christian faith would have fared no better in the intellectual morass of the Hungary of those days. But the painful suspicion was there, and could not easily be banished.

With my modest viaticum, lent to me on security, I was soon on the way, and on the journey from Pest to London I fortunately received many tokens of a favourable turn in my affairs. In Vienna I gathered from the notices about me in the daily papers that my journey had created a good deal of interest. At home jealous, narrow-minded people, even from the Academy circle, had published scornful remarks about me on the day after my arrival, and amongst other things blamed me for appearing in the Academy hall with my fez on, not considering that, being used to the heavy turban, my head had to get gradually used to the lighter covering of Europe. But the foreign papers were enthusiastic in their praise and appreciation of my endeavours. In my progress Westward these good signs gradually increased. At Cologne I was interviewed by the *Kölnische Zeitung;* and in the railway carriage from Dover to London my travelling companions were interested to hear of the purpose of my journey, and one of these was a man whose identity has remained a mystery to me to this day. He was a Mr. *Smith* according to his card, and seemed so pleased to make my acquaintance that on our arrival in the capital he took me to the Hotel Victoria, engaged a splendid

room for me, and that evening and the next day entertained me with regal hospitality. Then he found a private house for me, and, as I afterwards learned, paid the first month's rent for me. After he had seen me comfortably settled this kind-hearted man took leave of me. Who was this Mr. Smith? From that day till now I have not been able to find out. I have never seen him again. And indeed his was a deed of charity. But for him how should I have managed in this English Babel, with my small means and absolute ignorance of Western ways and customs.

When I had become somewhat familiar with the British metropolis I presented my letters of introduction to Sir Roderick Murchison, President of the Royal Geographical Society; Sir Henry Rawlinson, the greatest authority on Central Asiatic affairs; Sir Henry A. Layard, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Sir Justin Sheil, former Ambassador at Teheran, and last, but not least, Lord Strangford, the great authority on the Moslemic East. All gave me a hearty welcome, and interrogated me upon the details of my travels and the condition of things in Central Asia. Pleased as I was with the interest shown by these experts, I was not a little surprised to find everywhere, instead of the anticipated ice-crust of English etiquette a hearty and sincere appreciation of my labours. I realised at once that here I was in my element, and that I had hit upon the best market

for the publication of my travelling experiences. And how could it be otherwise? England, with its widespread colonies, with its gigantic universal trade, and its lively interest in anything that happens in the remotest corners of the earth, England is, and remains, the only land of great, universal ideas. Here the fostering of geographical and ethnographical knowledge is closely connected with the commercial, political, and national concerns of the people, and as with the wide view they take of things the question of practical usefulness triumphs over petty national jealousies, it is quite natural that the Britishers do not trouble themselves about the origin and antecedents of their heroes; and in the case of the Frenchman, German, or Hungarian who happens to have enriched their knowledge of lands and peoples, gladly forget the title of "foreigner," otherwise not particularly liked in England. I noticed all this during the first few days of my stay in England, and necessarily this prominent feature of the English national character came later on even more strikingly and, in my case, advantageously to the foreground. With the exception of one small, rather amusing episode, there was not the slightest hitch in my reception. My strongly sunburnt face, but more still my thorough knowledge of Persian and Turkish, which I spoke without the slightest accent, made some people suspicious as to my European, *i.e.*, Hungarian descent. Some Orientalists would take me

for a disguised Asiatic, and for some time they withheld their confidence, but when General Kmetty, a countryman of mine, then living in London, who had known me in Constantinople, allayed their doubts their appreciation was all the greater, and two weeks after my arrival on the banks of the Thames I had quite a crowd of friends and acquaintances, who spread my fame by word of mouth and pen, and transformed the former Dervish suddenly into a celebrity and a lion of London society.

This episode is not without its comical side, and shows how an inborn talent for languages, or rather for talking, may deceive even the cleverest expert in finding out people's nationalities. In Asia they took me for a Turk, a Persian, or Central Asiatic, and very seldom for a European. Here in Europe they thought I was a disguised Persian or Osmanli, such is the curious sport of ethnical location!

I made my *début* by a lecture at Burlington House, under the auspices of the Royal Geographical Society, before a large and select audience. Here I delivered my first speech in English, with a strong foreign accent, as the *Times* remarked next day, but still I spoke for an hour and made myself understood. From that evening dates my title of "Explorer," and with it came a considerable change in my material condition. Instead of having to seek a publisher, I was literally overrun by men of the craft and inundated with offers. Absolutely

inexperienced as I was in such matters, I took advice with my friends, and Lord Strangford decided this momentous question for me, and very kindly introduced me to John Murray, rightly called the "prince of publishers." A short conversation with him settled the whole matter. The contract was simply that after deducting the printing costs I was to receive half of the nett proceeds, and when the first edition was sold I should have the right to make other arrangements. These conditions seemed bad enough, but as Lord Strangford said, it was not so much the question now to make money by it as to get my book introduced into society; and as Murray only published the intellectual products of the fashionable world, my connection with him would be to my advantage in other ways, that is, it would serve as an introduction to society. For England, the land of strict formalities and outward appearances, this view was perfectly correct. The publishing offices in Albemarle Street, where Murray had his business place then, were known as the literary forum of the *élite*. The Queen was at that time in negotiation with Mr. Murray about the publication of the late Prince Consort's Memoirs, and Lord Derby was publishing his translation of Homer with him. Any dealings with this house raised the author at once to the position of a gentleman, even if they did not provide him with the means to act as such. When my arrangements

Illustrations

PROFESSOR VAMBÉRY AT THE AGE OF SEVENTY . *Frontispiece*

PROFESSOR VAMBÉRY IN HIS EIGHTEENTH YEAR *Facing page* 35

with Murray were completed and he said, "You can draw upon me," I seemed all at once changed from a beggar into a Crœsus. I accepted his offer and at once drew a cheque for £50, followed later on by larger amounts, and this sudden transformation of my financial position very nearly turned my brain. Fortunately my friends explained to me just in time that this offer of the publisher's was a mere act of courtesy, that I must not build any false hopes upon it, that it would have its limits, and that I should not really know how I stood until the first accounts were squared.

In my excess of joy I had given but little thought to this important question. One must have been in the rushing stream of London high-life, one must have gone through the everlasting feastings, the dinners, luncheons, parties, balls, &c., which fall to the lot of a society lion during the so-called "season," to understand how little time one has for thinking, and how a constant intercourse with millionaires makes one fancy one's self in possession of inexhaustible wealth. Day after day the post brought piles of invitations to lunch, or dinner, races, hunting-parties, visits to beautiful country-houses, and all imaginable pleasures and recreations. Hardly a tenth part of the people who thus offered me hospitality I knew personally. I was received everywhere as a friend and old acquaintance, and overwhelmed with attentions of all sorts. One recommended

me to another, and the draconic law of fashion made it everybody's imperative duty to entertain the stranger who was about to publish in England the result of his perilous travels, and give England the first benefit of them, and in this manner to show him the gratitude of the nation.

I do not doubt that underlying all this there was a strong dose of snobbishness, in which England excels, an aping of the great and the wealthy and the highly cultured, for I am certain that many of my entertainers had but very vague notions about Central Asia. Nevertheless expressions of appreciation of my toils and labours, even if they were speculations upon ulterior benefits on the part of my hosts, could not leave me quite indifferent; in fact they took a most astonishing hold of me. When I saw with what fervour Livingstone was received on his second return from Africa, how anonymous patrons placed large sums at his disposal, and how patiently his curious whims and tempers were put up with; when I witnessed the part played in society by Burton, Speke, Grant, Du Chaillu, and Kirk, and realised that these highly celebrated "travellers" were not thus admired, distinguished, and rewarded for their great learning, but rather for their manly character, their personal courage and spirit of enterprise, I began to understand the eminently practical bent of the British nation, and the problem was explained how this little Albion had attained to so

great power, so great riches, and boasts possessions which encircle the entire globe. Indeed the traveller in England enjoys much more notoriety than ever the greatest scholar and artist does on the Continent. He has seen distant lands and continents and knows where the best and the cheapest raw materials are to be had, and where the industrial products of the Mother Country can be sold most advantageously. He clears the way for the missionary and the trader and, in their wake, for the red-coat; and just as in past ages the thirst for discovery as manifested by a Drake, a Raleigh, and a Cook materially contributed to the greatness of England, so now it is expected that the explorer's zeal and love of adventure will help to expand the country's political and commercial spheres of interest.

A cursory glance at England's latest acquisitions in the most diverse portions of the globe justifies this national point of view. At the time of my visit to London I met Mr. Stewart, the bold explorer of the Steppes of Australia, physically a perfect wreck on account of the great fatigues he had sustained; but he was lionised tremendously. Australia at that time counted scarcely a million inhabitants, and now the number of Englishmen settled there has risen to four or five millions. The number of explorers, missionaries, and colonists has steadily increased, and this Colony, which is almost independent of the Mother Country,

now plays a very important part in the British Empire. The same may be expected of Africa. From the beginning of the sixties the African travels of Livingstone, and later on those of Du Chaillu, Burton, Speke, Grant, Baker, &c., were looked upon as great national events, the consequences of which would affect not only politics and commerce, but also ordinary workmen and artisans. And now, after scarce half a century, the British flag waves over the most diverse and by far the best parts of the Dark Continent. Railways run across the borderlands; in the Soudan, Uganda, Bulawayo and other lands, Western culture in British garb is making its way; and during the late South African War the whole nation, including its Colonies, manifested as much zeal and patriotism for the establishment of British power in Africa as if it concerned the defence of London or Birmingham. When we estimate at its right value this profound national interest in the exploration of foreign lands, we cannot be so very much surprised at England's political greatness, nor at the degree of attention paid to travellers. The English saying, "Trade follows the flag," can hardly be called correct, for first of all comes the explorer, then the missionary, then the merchant, and lastly comes the flag.

Of course my travels did not warrant any such expectations. The chief point of interest of these lay in the information which I brought from

Khiva, Bokhara, and Herat, and more especially with regard to the secret movements of Russia towards South Asia, so far unknown in England because of the total isolation of Central Asia. In political circles curiosity in this respect had reached a high pitch, for wild and undefined rumours were afloat about the Northern Colossus advancing towards the Yaxartes. My appearance was therefore of political importance, and when I add to this the interest created by the manner in which I had travelled—I mean my Dervish incognito, which amused the sensation-loving English people just as my proficiency in different European languages and Asiatic idioms provoked their curiosity — my brilliant reception is to a certain extent explained. The rapid change of scene during the early part of my sojourn in London quite stunned me; I lived in a world altogether new and hitherto undreamed of. For many days I had quite a struggle to adopt not merely European but English manners and customs. The contrast between the free-and-easy life of Asiatic lands—where in the way of food, clothes, and general behaviour, only such restraint is required as one chooses to lay upon oneself—and the rigid rules of society life to which in England one is expected to conform, was often painful and disagreeable to me. One gets sometimes into the most uncomfortable and ridiculous predicaments, and Livingstone was right when he once said to me, "Oh, how happy was my life in Africa; how

beautiful is the freedom amidst naked barbarism as compared with the tyrannical etiquette of our refined society!"

Thoughts of this kind came to me also sometimes; I even longed often for the unfettered life and the ever-varying vicissitudes of my wanderings, but these were merely the result of momentary depression. The contrast between the highest and the lowest stage of civilisation had quite a different effect upon me, for in my inmost mind I clung to the medium stage of culture of my native land; the home where, in spite of the mortifications inflicted upon me, I hoped one day to find a quieter haven of refuge than in the noisy, restless centre of Western activity.

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VAMBÉRY AFTER HIS RETURN FROM CENTRAL ASIA.

Photographed in Teheran, 1863.

Frontispiece to Vol. II.

THE STORY OF MY STRUGGLES

THE MEMOIRS OF ARMINIUS VAMBÉRY

PROFESSOR OF ORIENTAL LANGUAGES
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BUDAPEST

VOLUME II

SECOND IMPRESSION

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Contents

CHAPTER VII.

PAGE

FROM LONDON TO BUDAPEST 237

CHAPTER VIII.

MY POLITICAL CAREER AND POSITION IN ENGLAND . . 283

CHAPTER IX.

THE TRIUMPH OF MY LABOURS 317

CHAPTER X.

AT THE ENGLISH COURT 329

CHAPTER XI.

MY INTERCOURSE WITH SULTAN ABDUL HAMID . . 343

CHAPTER XII.

PAGE

MY INTERCOURSE WITH NASREDDIN SHAH AND HIS SUCCESSOR 391

CHAPTER XIII.

THE STRUGGLE'S END, AND YET NO END . . . 411

APPENDICES 459

Illustrations

PROFESSOR VAMBÉRY AFTER HIS RETURN FROM CENTRAL ASIA . . . . *Frontispiece*

PROFESSOR VAMBÉRY AND HIS TARTAR, 1864 *Facing page* 393

From London to Budapest

CHAPTER VII

FROM LONDON TO BUDAPEST

I HAVE often been asked how it was that, after the bitter disappointment I had experienced in my native land on my return from Asia, and after the brilliant reception accorded to me in England, I yet preferred to settle down permanently in Hungary.

People have been surprised that I should choose a quiet literary career, whereas my many years of intimate intercourse with various Eastern nations might have been turned to so much better account, and a practical, active career would have been so much more in keeping with my character. All these questions were asked of me at the time in London, but filled as I then became with a sense of oppression and a great longing for home I could not give a satisfactory answer to these queries. Now that the cloud has lifted, and my vision is clear, now that sober reflection has taken the place of former rapture and exultation, the causes which influenced my decision are perfectly clear. I see now that I could not have acted differently; that

the step I took was partly the result of my personal inclination and views of life, and partly influenced by the circumstances of my birth and bringing up, and the notions then generally prevailing in Hungary; nor have I cause or ground to regret my decision.

In the first place I have to confess that in England, notwithstanding the noisy, brilliant receptions I had, and all the attention paid to me, no one ever made me any actual proposal with a view to my future benefit, and no one seemed at all disposed to turn to account my practical experiences in the service of the State or of private enterprise. The Memorandum about the condition of things in Central Asia, written at the time in Teheran at the request of the British Ambassador there, had duly found its way to Lord Palmerston, the Prime Minister. The gray statesman received me most kindly; I was often a guest at his private house, or dined with him at Mr. Tomlin's, of Carlton House Terrace, or at Sir Roderick Murchison's, of 16, Belgrave Square. At his initiative I was invited to other distinguished houses, for the merry old gentleman was much entertained by my lively conversation and my anecdotes from Asia, which I used to relate after dinner when the ladies had retired. My stories about the white ass of the English Embassy at Teheran, of diplomatic repute, and similar amusing details of court life in Persia and the Khanates of Central Asia,

tickled the fancy of the most serious, sober-minded of these high lords, and went the round in the fashionable West End circles. But for all that they saw in me merely the "lively foreigner," the versatile traveller, and if here and there some interest was shown in my future, it amounted to asking what were my latest travelling plans, and when I thought of setting out in search of fresh discoveries. As if I had not been on the go for two-and-twenty years, ever since I was ten years old! as if I had not battled and struggled and suffered enough! And now that for the first time in my life I had lighted on a green bough and hoped to have accomplished something, was I again straightway to plunge into the vague ocean of destiny? "No, no," I reflected; "I am now thirty-two years old, without for one moment having enjoyed the pleasures of a quiet, peaceful life, and without possessing enough to permit myself the luxury of resting on my own bed, or of working comfortably at my own table." This uncertain, unsatisfactory state of things must come to an end sometime; and so the desire for rest and peace necessarily overruled any inclination for great and ambitious plans, and nipped in the bud all projects which possibly might have made my career more brilliant, but certainly not happier than it afterwards turned out.

The kind reader of these pages who is familiar with the struggles and troubles of my childhood, who has followed me in thought on the thorny path

of early youth, and knows something of my experiences as self-taught scholar and tutor, will perhaps accuse me of dejection, and blame me for want of perseverance and steadiness of purpose. Possibly I have disregarded the golden saying of my mother, "One must make one's bed half the night, the better to rest the other half." I did give way to dejection, but my resolve, however blameworthy it may be, should be looked upon as the natural consequence of a struggle for existence which began all too early and lasted sadly too long. Man is not made of iron, too great a tension must be followed by a relaxation, and since the first fair half of my life began to near its ending, my former iron will also began to lose some of its force. The wings of my ambition were too weak to soar after exalted ideals, and I contented myself with the prospect of a modest professorship at the University of my native land and the meagre livelihood this would give me.

In England, where a man in his early thirties is, so to speak, still in the first stage of his life, and energy is only just beginning to swell the sails of his bark, my longing for rest was often misunderstood and disapproved of. In London I met a gentleman of sixty who wanted to learn Persian and start a career in India; and I was going to stop my practical career at the age of thirty-two! The difference seems enormous, but in the foggy North man's constitution is much tougher and

harder than in the South. My physical condition, my previous sufferings and privations, may to some extent account for my despondency; I had to give in, although my object was only half gained.

Emotions of this kind overpowered me even in the whirl and rush of the first months of my stay in London. Before long I had seen through the deceptive glamour of all the brilliancy around me; and as I very soon realised that my personal acquaintance with high society and the most influential and powerful persons would hardly help me to a position in England, I endeavoured at least to use the present situation as a step towards a position at home, in the hope that the recognition I had obtained in England would be of service to me in my native land, where the appreciation of foreign lands is always a good recommendation. First of all I set to work upon my book of travels, an occupation which took me scarcely three months to accomplish, and which, written with the experiences all yet fresh in my mind, resolved itself chiefly into a dry and unadorned enumeration of adventures and facts. The introduction of historical and philological notes would have been impossible in any case, as my Oriental MSS. were detained in Pest as security on the money loan, and also because in England everything that does not actually bear upon political, economical, or commercial interests is looked upon as superfluous ballast. When the

first proof-sheets appeared of my *Travels in Central Asia* many of my friends regretted the brevity and conciseness of the composition, but the style was generally approved of, and after its publication the various criticisms and discussions of the work eulogised me to such an extent, that my easily roused vanity would soon have got the better of me, had I not been aware of the fact that all this praise was to a great extent an expression of the hospitality which England as a nation feels it its duty to pay to literary foreigners. This, my literary firstfruits, necessarily contributed a good deal to increase my popularity, and enlarged the circle of my acquaintance in high society to which I had been semi-officially introduced by my Asiatic friends. My fame now spread to all scientific, industrial, and commercial circles all over England. I had no time to breathe. The post brought me double as many invitations as before; I was literally besieged by autograph hunters and photographers; and it is no exaggeration to say that for months together I had invitations for every meal of the day, and that my engagements were arranged for, days and weeks beforehand.

Wearisome and expensive as this enjoyment of popularity was—for in my outward appearance and bearing I could not neglect any of the prescribed forms which mark the "distinguished foreigner"—my position afforded me the opportunity of studying London society, and through it the aims and

objects of the highest representatives of Western culture, in a manner which might otherwise not have come within my reach. When in my youth I journeyed Westward I never went beyond the frontiers of Austria, and it was always only in literary pursuits that I came in contact with Western lands: hence I never saw any but the theoretical side of things. And now I was transplanted from the depths of Asia, *i.e.*, from the extreme end of old-world culture and gross barbarism into the extreme of Western civilisation and modern culture; and overpowering as was the impression of all that I saw and experienced, equally interesting to me was the comparison of the two stages of human progress.

What surprised me more than anything was the wealth, the comfort, and the luxury of the English country houses, compared to which the rich colouring of Oriental splendour—existing as a matter of fact mostly in legends and fairy tales—cuts but a poor figure. As for me, who all my life had only seen the smile of fortune from a distance, I was struck with admiration. Most difficult of all I found it to get used to the elaborate meals and the table pomp of the English aristocracy. I could not help thinking of the time of my Dervishship, when my meals consisted sometimes of begged morsels and sometimes of *pilaw* which I cooked myself. Now I had to eat through an endless series of courses, and drink the queerest mixtures. During this period of

my lionship it was strangest of all to think of the miseries of my childish days and the time when I was a mendicant student. It was the realisation of the fairy tale of the beggar and the prince; and with reference to this I shall never forget one night which I spent at the magnificent country house of the Duke of A., not far from Richmond. I was guest there together with Lord Clarendon, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and other English notabilities. After dinner the company adjourned to the luxuriously furnished smoke-room, and from there shortly before midnight every guest was conducted to his respective bedroom by a lacquey preceding him with two huge silver chandeliers. When the powdered footman dressed in red silk velvet had ushered me into the splendidly furnished bedroom, provided with every possible comfort and luxury, and began to take steps to assist me in undressing, I looked at the man quite dumbfounded and said with a friendly smile, "Thank you, I can manage alone." The footman departed. I feasted my eyes upon all the grandeur around me. It was like a cabinet full of precious curiosities and overflowing with silver articles and wonderful arrangements of all sorts. When I turned back the brocaded coverlet and lay down on the undulating bed, my fancy carried me back twenty years, and I thought of my night quarters in the Three Drums Street at Pest with the widow Schönfeld, where I had hired a bed in company with a tailor's

apprentice, he taking the head and I the foot of the bed. Musing upon the strange alternations of man's lot, and the difference between my condition then and now, I could not go to sleep, but tossed about half the night on my silken couch. It was after all merely a childish reflection, for, though now in splendour, I was but a guest. But it is difficult to divest oneself of the impression of the moment, and as often as I found myself in a similar position the comparison between the mendicant student suffering want and the petted lion of English society has brought me to a contemplative mood.

More even than by the wealth and prosperity I was struck by the spirit of freedom which, notwithstanding the strictly aristocratic etiquette of society, must surprise the South-Eastern European, and more still any one who from the inner Asiatic world finds himself suddenly transplanted to the banks of the Thames. Formerly, in my native land it was always with unconscious awe and admiration that I looked up to a prince, a count, or a baron, and afterwards in Asia I had to approach a Pasha, Khan, or Sirdar with submissive mien, sometimes even with homage. And now I was surprised to notice how little attention was paid to dukes, lords, and baronets in the clubs and other public places in England. When for the first time I went into the reading-room of the Athenæum Club, and with my hat on stood reading the *Times* opposite to Lord

Palmerston and at the same desk with him, I could hardly contain myself for surprise, and my eyes rested more often on the strong features of "Mister Pam" than on the columns of the city paper. Later on I was introduced in the Cosmopolitan Club to the Prince of Wales, then twenty-three years old. This club did not open till after midnight. When I saw the future ruler of Albion sitting there at his ease, without the other members taking the slightest notice of him, I fairly gasped at the apparent indifference shown to the Queen's son. I could but approach the young Prince with the utmost reverence and awe; and it was entirely owing to the great affability and kindness of heart of this son of the Queen that I plucked up courage to sit down and hold half an hour's conversation with him. Since that time this specially English characteristic of individual freedom and independence has often struck me forcibly, and could not fail to strike any one accustomed to the cringing spirit of Asia and the servility of Eastern Europe. Truly a curious mixture of the sublime and the ridiculous, of really noble and frivolous impressions, marked these first months of my sojourn in England. Feelings of admiration and contempt, of delight and scorn alternated within me; and when I ask myself now what it was that I disliked about England, and drove me to unfavourable criticism, I would mention in the first place the rigid society manners, utterly foreign to me, which I found it hard to conform to

and consequently detested. The straitjacket of etiquette and society manners oppresses the English themselves more than they care to acknowledge; how, then, must it affect the Continental and the wanderer fresh from the Steppes of Asia? The second reason which made the idea of a longer stay in London quite impossible for me was the dislike, nay, the absolute horror I had of the incessant hurrying, rushing, bustling crowds in the thoroughfares; the desperate efforts to gain honour and riches, and the niggardly grudging of every minute of time. Standing at the corner of Lombard Street or Cheapside, or mixing with the crowds madly hurrying along Ludgate Hill, I felt like a man suddenly transported to pandemonium. To see how these masses push and press past one another, how the omnibus drivers swing round the corners, regardless of danger to human life, for the mere chance of gaining a few coppers more, and to realise how this same struggle for existence goes on in all stages of society, in all phases of life, relentless, merciless, was enough to make me think with longing of the indolent life of Eastern lands; and, without admitting the Nirvana theory, all this fuss and flurry seemed out of place and far too materialistic. My nature altogether revolted against it.

Of course this view was quite erroneous. For what has made England great was, and is, this very same prominent individuality, this restless

striving and struggling, this utter absence of all fear, hesitation, and sentimentality where the realisation of a preconceived idea is concerned. But unfortunately at that time I was still under the ban of Asiaticism; and although the slowness, indolence, and blind fanaticism of the Asiatics had annoyed me, equally disagreeable to me was the exactly opposite tendency here manifested. I wanted to find the "golden middle way," and unconsciously I was drawn towards my own home, where on the borderland between these two worlds I hoped to find what I sought.

And now, after the lapse of so many years, recalling to mind some personal reminiscences of London society, I seem to recognise in the political, scientific, and artistic world of those days so many traits of a truly humane and noble nature, mixed with the most bizarre and eccentric features which have been overlooked by observers.

The gigantic edifice of the British Empire was then still in progress of building, the scaffolding was not yet removed, some portions still awaited their completion; and as the beautiful structure could not yet be viewed in its entirety, and an impression of the whole could, therefore, not be realised, there was in the nation but little of that superabundant self-consciousness for which modern times are noted. They listened to me with pleasure when I spoke of England's mighty influence over the Moslem East, they heard with undisguised gratification when I

commended England's civilising superiority over that of Russia, but yet they did not seem to trust their own eyes, and to many my words were mere polite speeches with which the petted foreigner reciprocated their hospitality. The interest shown by a foreigner in a foreign land must always seem somewhat strange, and my appreciative criticisms of England may have appeared suspicious to many of my readers. Only later statements by such men as Baron Hübner in his *Travels in India*, or Garcin de Tassy's learned disquisitions on the influence of English culture on Hindustan, have lent more weight to my writings.

Of all the leading statesmen of the time I felt most attracted towards Lord Palmerston. I recognised in him a downright Britisher, with a French polish and German thoroughness; a politician who, with his gigantic memory, could command to its smallest details the enormous Department of Foreign Affairs, and who knew all about the lands and the people of Turkey, Persia, and India. He seemed to carry in his head the greater portion of the diplomatic correspondence between the East and the West; and what particularly took my fancy were the jocular remarks which he used to weave into his conversation, together with *bon-mots* and more serious matters. In the after-dinner chats at the house of Mr. Tomlin, not far from the Athenæum Club, or at 16, Belgrave Square with Sir Roderick Murchison, where I was an often invited guest, he

used to be particularly eloquent. When he began to arrange the little knot of his wide, white cravat, and hemmed a little, one could always be sure that some witty remark was on its way, and during the absence of the ladies subjects were touched upon which otherwise were but seldom discussed in the prudish English society of the day. I had to come forward with harem stories and anecdotes of different lands, and the racier they were the more heartily the noble lord laughed. The Prime Minister was at that time already considerably advanced in years. The most delicate questions of the day were freely discussed, and I must confess that it pleased me very much when they did not look upon me as an outsider, but fully took me into their confidence. Lord Granville, afterwards Minister of Foreign Affairs, treated me also with great kindness. He was a little more reserved, certainly, but an intrinsically good man, and it always pleased him when I was at table with him to hear me converse with the different foreign ambassadors in their native tongue. His sister, Mrs. James, an influential lady in high life, provided me with invitations from various quarters, and it was she who urged me to settle in London. Similar encouragements I also received from Sir Justin Sheil, at one time British Ambassador in Persia, and his wife, most distinguished, excellent, people, who instructed me in the ways of fashionable life, and taught me how to dress and how to

comport myself at table, in the drawing-room and in the street. Blunders against the orthodoxy of English customs were resented by many; and once a lady who had seen me on the top of an omnibus, from where the busy street-life of London can best be observed, said to me in full earnest, "Sir, take care not to be seen there again, otherwise you can no longer appear as a gentleman in society." Admittance into society is everything in England. One is severely judged by the cut and colour of one's clothes. Society ladies demand that hat, umbrella, and walking-stick come from the very best shop, and most important is the club to which one belongs, and of course also the circle of one's acquaintances. When I was able to give as my address, "Athenæum Club, Pall Mall," the barometer of my importance rose considerably.

One can easily understand that all these trifles were little to my taste. I had always been fond of simplicity and natural manners. All these formalities and superficialities were hateful to me, but at that time I had to yield to necessity and make the best of a bad job; nay, even be grateful to my instructors for their well-meant advice in these matters.

Honestly speaking, I have found among these people some very noble-minded friends who, from purely humane motives, interested themselves in me, and whose kind treatment I shall not forget as long as I live. Amongst these I would especially mention

Lord Strangford, already referred to, a man of brilliant scientific talents, and possessing a quite extraordinary knowledge of geography, history, and the languages of the Moslem East. He had lived for many years on the banks of the Bosphorus as Secretary to the Embassy, and was not only thoroughly acquainted with Osmanli, Persian, and Hindustani, but also with the Chagataic language, then absolutely unknown in Europe. He could recite long passages from the poems of Newai. He was as much at home in the works of Sadi, Firdusi, and Baki as in Milton and Shakespeare, and well informed as regards the ethnography and politics of the Balkan peoples, and the various tribes of Central Asia and India. Lord Strangford, indeed, was to me a living wonder, and when he shook his long-bearded, bony head in speaking of Asia and criticising the politics of Lord Palmerston, I should have liked to note down every word he said, for he was a veritable mine of Oriental knowledge. It is very strange that this man was not used as English Ambassador at one of the Oriental courts, and it has often been laid to Lord Palmerston's charge that he, the illustrious Premier, was not well disposed towards his Irish countryman, who sometimes expressed his resentment of the slight in the columns of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the *Saturday*, or the *Quarterly Review*. As far as I am concerned Lord Strangford was always a most kind and considerate patron, one of the best and most un-

selfish friends I had in England, and his early death was a great grief to me. He died of brain fever, and, as Lady Strangford afterwards wrote to me, holding in his hand the volume of my Chagataic Grammar which I had dedicated to him.

Next to the noble Lord Strangford I would mention the great mathematician, Mr. Spottiswoode, who often asked me to his house; also Sir Alexander Gordon, in Mayfair, whose sister, knowing something of Egypt, took a special interest in my travels. I was also a welcome guest at Lord Houghton's, both in town at Brook Street and in the country at Ferrybridge, Yorkshire. The lunch parties at his town residence were often of a peculiarly interesting nature. The master of the house, a lover of sharp contrasts, used to gather round his table the fanatical admirer of Mohammedanism, Lord Stanley of Alderley, and the equally fanatical Protestant Bishop of Oxford, Dr. Wilberforce, known as "Soapy Sam." Most lively disputes took place at times in defence of the teachings of Christ and Mohammed, in which the disputants did not deal over-gently with one another, and their forcible attacks upon each other's convictions sometimes caused the most ridiculous scenes. Still finer were the meetings at Ferrybridge, Lord Houghton's country seat. During one visit there I made the acquaintance of such celebrities as Lord Lytton, afterwards Viceroy of India; the poet Algernon Swinburne, who used to read to us passages of his

yet unpublished poem, *Atalanta in Calydon*, over which the slender youth went into ecstasies; and last, but not least, of Burton, just returned from a mission in the North-West of Africa. Burton—later Sir Richard Burton—was to spend his honeymoon under the hospitable roof of the genial Lord Houghton. The company, amongst which Madame Mohl, the wife of the celebrated Orientalist, Jules Mohl, specially attracted my attention, had met here in honour of Burton, the great traveller, and as he was the last to arrive, Lord Houghton planned the following joke: I was to leave the drawing-room before Burton appeared with his young wife, hide behind one of the doors, and at a given sign recite the first *Sura* of the Koran with correct Moslem modulation. I did as arranged. Burton went through every phase of surprise, and jumping up from his seat exclaimed, "That is Vambéry!" although he had never seen or heard me before. In after years I entertained the most friendly relations with this remarkable man, whom I hold to be, incontestably, the greatest traveller of the nineteenth century, for he had the most intimate knowledge of all Moslemic Asia; he was a clever Arabic scholar, had explored portions of Africa together with Speke, and gone through the most awful adventures at the court of Dahomey; he had explored the unknown regions of North and South America, and also made himself a literary name by his translations of the *Lusiade* and *The*

Thousand and One Nights; in a word, this strangely gifted man, who was never fully appreciated in his own country, and through his peculiarities laid himself open to much misunderstanding, was from the very first an object of the greatest admiration for me. His contemporary and fellow-worker, Gifford Palgrave, I also reckoned among my friends. He was a classical Englishman, first belonging to the Anglican and afterwards to the Roman Catholic Church. For some time he was in the service of the Society of Jesus, as teacher in the mission school at Beyrût; and as he was quite at home in the Arabic language, he undertook a journey into the then unknown country of Nedjd, the chief resort of the Wahâbis, about whom his book of travels contains many interesting new data. Being a classical orator, he used to fascinate his audience with his choice language, and what Spurgeon has been in the pulpit and Gladstone in Parliament, that was Palgrave in the hall of the Geographical Society. I liked the man fairly well, only a peculiar twinkle of the eye constantly reminded me of his former Jesuitism. In David Livingstone, the great African explorer, I found a congenial fellow-labourer, whose words of appreciation, "What a pity you did not make Africa the scene of your activity!" sounded pleasant in my ears.

Other travellers, such as Speke, Grant, Kirk and others, I was also proud to reckon among

my friends; and in the field of literature I would mention in the first place Charles Dickens, whose acquaintance I made at the Athenæum Club, and who often asked me to have dinner at the same table with him. Dickens was not particularly talkative, but he was very much interested in my adventures, and when once I declined his invitation for the following evening with the apology that I had to dine at Wimbledon with my publisher, John Murray, he remarked, "So you are going to venture into the 'Brain Castle,' for of course you know," he continued, "that Murray's house is not built of brick but of human brains." Among politicians, artists, actors, financiers, generals—in fact in all classes and ranks of society—I had friends and acquaintances. I had no cause to complain of loneliness or neglect; any one else would no doubt have been supremely happy in my place, and would have made better use also of the general complaisance. But I was as yet absolutely new to this Western world; I was as it were still wrapped in the folds of Asiatic thought, and, in spite of my enthusiasm for modern culture, I had great difficulty in making myself familiar with the principal conditions of this phase of life, with its everlasting rushing and hurrying, the unremitting efforts to get higher up, and the cold discretion of the combatants. In fact, my first visit to England made me feel gloomy and discouraged.

This depression was yet enhanced by the disappointment in regard to the material results of my book, and the rude awakening out of my dreams of comparative prosperity. To judge from the enthusiastic reception of my work both in Europe and America, and after all the laudatory criticisms of the Press, I expected to get from the sale of the first edition a sum at least sufficient to ensure my independence. The newspapers talked of quite colossal sums which my publisher had paid or would pay me, and I was consequently not a little crestfallen when at the end of the year I received the first account, according to which I had made a net profit of £500, a sum of which I had spent nearly a third in London. The modest remainder, in the eyes of the former Dervish a small fortune, was as nothing to the European accustomed to London high-life, and not by a long way sufficient for the writer, anxious to make a home for himself. The vision of all my fair anticipations and bold expectations vanished as a mist before my eyes, and after having tasted of the golden fruit of the Hesperides, was I to go back to my scantily furnished table, nay, perhaps be reduced again to poverty and the struggle for daily bread? After twenty years of hard fighting I was back again where I was at the beginning of my career, with this difference, that I had gained a name and reputation, a capital, however, which would not yield its interest till much later.

I am therefore not at all surprised that in my desperate frame of mind I clutched at a straw, and looked upon a professorship at Pest and the doctor's chair of Oriental languages as the bark of salvation upon the still turbulent ocean of my life. True, my cold reception at home had somewhat sobered me, and made the realisation of even this modest ambition not quite so easy of attainment, but my longing for my native land and for a quiet corner admitted of no hesitation, no doubt. With incredible light-heartedness I disengaged myself from the embrace of the noisy, empty homage of the great city on the Thames and sped to Pest to present myself to my compatriots after my triumphal campaign in England and crowned with the laurels of appreciation of the cultured West. As may be supposed, my reception was somewhat warmer but not much more splendid than on my return from Asia. Small nations in the early stages of their cultural development often follow the lead of greater, mightier, and more advanced lands in their distribution of blame or praise. The homely proverb, "Young folks do as old folks did," can also be applied to whole communities, and, especially where it concerns the appreciation and acknowledgment of matters rather beyond the intellectual and national limits of the people, such copying or rather echoing of the superior criticism is quite permissible and excusable. On my return from

England my compatriots received me with marked attention, but Hungary was still an Austrian province, and in order to attain the coveted professorship I had to go to Vienna and solicit the favour of an audience with the Emperor. The Emperor Francis Joseph, a noble-minded monarch and exceptionally kind-hearted—who was not unjustly called the first gentleman of the realm—received me most graciously, asked some particulars about my travels, and at once granted me my request, adding, "You have suffered much and deserve this post." He made only one objection, viz., that even in Vienna there are but few who devote themselves to the study of Oriental languages, and that in Hungary I should find scarcely any hearers. On my reply, "If I can get no one to listen to me I can learn myself," the Emperor smiled and graciously dismissed me.

I shall always feel indebted to this noble monarch, although, on the other hand, from the very first I have had much to bear from the Austrian Bureaucracy and the fustiness of the mediæval spirit which ruled the higher circles of Austrian society; perhaps more correctly from their innate ignorance and stupidity. The Lord-High-Steward, Prince A., whom I had to see before the audience, regardless of the recommendations I brought from the Austrian Ambassador in London, received me with a coldness and pride as if I had come to apply for a position as lackey,

and while royal personages of the West, and later on also Napoleon, had shaken hands with me and asked me to sit down, this Austrian aristocrat kept me standing for ten minutes, spoke roughly to me, and dismissed me with the impression that a man of letters is treated with more consideration in Khiva and among the Turkomans than in the Austrian capital.

And this, alas! hurt me all the more, as the social conditions at home in my native land were no better. Here also the wall of partition, class distinctions and religious differences rose like a black, impenetrable screen adorned with loathsome figures before my eyes, and the monster of blind prejudice blocked my way. The enormous distance between the appreciation of literary endeavours in the West and in the East grew in proportion as I left the banks of the Thames and neared my native land; for although the public in Hungary warmly welcomed their countryman, re-echoing the shouts of applause from England and France, nay, even looked upon him with national pride, I could not fail to notice on the part of the heads of society and the leading circles a cold and intentional neglect, which hurt me.

The fact that this Hungarian, who had been so much fêted abroad, was of obscure origin, without family relations, and, moreover, of Jewish extraction, spoiled the interest for many, and they forcibly suppressed any feelings of appreciation

they may have had. The Catholic Church, that hotbed of intolerance and blind prejudice, was the first in attack. It upbraided me for figuring as a Protestant and not as a Catholic, as if I, the freethinker, took any interest in sectarian matters!

I was the first non-Catholic professor appointed according to Imperial Cabinet orders to occupy a chair of the philosophical faculty at the Pest University. Thus not to give offence to this University—unjustly called a Catholic institution—by appointing a so-called Protestant, *i.e.*, a heretic, the title of professor was withheld from me, and for three years I had to content myself with the title of lector and the modest honorarium of 1,000 florins a year—a remuneration equal to that of any respectable nurse in England when besides her monthly wages we take into account her full keep! Truly, from a material point of view, my laborious and perilous travels had not profited me much!

To justify this humiliation certain circles at home took special care to depreciate me at every possible opportunity. Wise and learned men, for instance, professed to have come to the conclusion that my travels in the Far East, and the dangers and fatigues I had professed to have gone through, were a physical impossibility on account of my lame leg. "The Jew lies; he is a swindler, a boaster, like all his fellow-believers." Such were the comments, not merely in words, but actually printed in black and white; and when I introduced myself officially to

the Rector of the University, afterwards Catholic bishop of a diocese, I was greeted with the following gracious words, "Do you suppose we are not fully informed as to the treacherousness of your character? We are well aware that your knowledge of Oriental languages is but very faulty and that your fitness to fill the chair is very doubtful. But we do not wish to act against His Majesty's commands, and to this coercion only do you owe your appointment." Such was the gracious reception I had, and such were the encouraging words addressed to me after the learned Orientalists of Paris and London had loaded me with praise and honour, and after I had accomplished, in the service of my people, a journey which, as regards its perilousness, privations, and sufferings, can certainly not be called a pleasure trip.

As it is only natural that small communities on the lower steps of civilisation are either too lazy or too incapable to think, and are guided in their opinion by the views of the higher and leading ranks of society, I am not surprised that in certain circles of Hungary for years together I was looked upon with suspicion, and that my book of travels, which in the meantime had been translated for several Eastern and Western nations into their mother-tongue, was simply discredited at home. Similar causes have elsewhere, under similar conditions, produced similar effects. When the nick-

name of "Marco Millioni" could be given to the celebrated Venetian who traded all over Asia, why should I mind their treatment of me in Hungary, where, apart from national archæological considerations, nobody evinced any great interest in the distant East? Among the millions of my countrymen there was perhaps no more than one who had ever heard the names of Bokhara and Khiva, and under the extremely primitive cultural conditions of those days geographical explorations were not likely to excite very great interest. The nation, languishing in the bonds of absolutism, and longing for the restoration of Constitutional rights, was only interested in politics; and, since the few scientists, who in their inmost minds were convinced of the importance of my undertaking, had become prejudiced by the reception I had received abroad and were now filled with envy, my position was truly desperate, and for years I had to bear the sad consequences of ill-will. When the first Turkish Consul for Hungary appeared in Budapest he was asked on all sides whether it was really true that I knew Turkish, and when he replied that I spoke and wrote Turkish like a born Osmanli, everybody was greatly surprised. One of my kind friends and patrons said to me in reply to my remark that I should talk Persian with Rawlinson, "You can make us believe this kind of thing, but be careful not to take in other people." A few weeks later Rawlinson took me for a born Persian, but at

home they said it was unheard of for a Hungarian scientist to be able to speak Persian. So deplorably low was the standard of Hungarian learning in those days!

Under these conditions the reader may well be surprised, and I must confess that I am surprised myself now, that my deeply-wounded ambition did not revolt against these saddest of all experiences, but that I meekly bore these constant insults and calumnies. This extraordinary humility in the character of a man who in every fibre of his body was animated by ambition and a desire for fame, as I was in those days, has long been an enigma to me. I have accused myself of lack of courage and determination, and I should blush for shame at the memory of this weakness if it were not for the extenuating circumstance that I was utterly exhausted and wearied with my twenty years' struggle for existence, and that my strong craving for a quiet haven of rest was a further extenuation. What did I care that my supposed merits were not appreciated at home, since in the far advanced West the worth of my labours had been so amply recognised? Why should I trouble myself about the adverse criticism of my rivals and ill-wishers since I had at last found a quiet corner, and in possession of my two modestly furnished rooms could comfort myself with the thought that I had now at last found a home, and with the scanty but certain income of some eighty florins per

month I could sit down in peace to enjoy the long wished-for pursuit of quiet, undisturbed literary labour? When I had completed the furnishing of my humble little home, and, sitting down on the velvet-covered sofa, surveyed the little domain, which now for the first time I could call my own, I experienced a childish delight in examining all the little details which I had provided for my comfort. Thirty-three years long I had spent in this earthly vale of misery, a thousand ills, both physical and mental, to endure, before it was granted me to experience the blissful consciousness, henceforth no longer to be tossed about, the sport of fortune, no longer to be exposed to gnawing uncertainty, but quietly and cheerfully to pursue the object of my life, and by working out my experiences to benefit the world at large. To other mortals, more highly favoured by birth, my genuine satisfaction and delight may appear incomprehensible and ridiculous: one may object that I longed for rest too soon, and that the small results were scarcely worthy of all the hard labour. But he whom Fate has cast about for years on the stormy ocean hails with delight even the smallest and scantiest plot of solid land, and he who has never known riches or abundance enjoys his piece of dry but certain bread as much as the richest dish.

Such were the feelings which animated me when I settled down in surroundings altogether apart from my studies, my desires and views of life, and

such also were the feelings which made me proof against all the attacks and slights of a criticism animated more by ignorance than intentional ill-will. I simply revelled in the enjoyment of these first weeks and months of my new career. The healthy hunger for work acted like a precious tonic, the old indestructible cheerfulness returned, and when after my daily labour of eight or ten hours I went for a walk in the country I fancied myself the happiest man on earth. On account of the marked difference of treatment I had received in England and in Hungary, and in order not to subject myself to unnecessary slights, I had at home avoided all social intercourse as far as I possibly could. Thus on the one hand I had all the more leisure for my work, and on the other hand, through my large correspondence with foreign countries, I was led to remove the centre of gravity of my literary operations and the chief aim and object of my pursuits to foreign lands. At first this necessity troubled me; but the remark of my noble patron, Baron Eötvös, that Hungary never could be the field of my literary labours, and that I should benefit my native land far more by putting the products of my pen upon the world's market in foreign languages soon comforted me. I wrote mostly in German and English, and enlarged my mind in various branches of practical and theoretical knowledge of Asiatic peoples and countries. Two years had scarcely passed before my pen was the most in

request on subjects of the geographical, ethnographical, philological, scientific, and political literature of Central Asia—in fact, of the whole Moslemic East. During this period I saw the realisation of the boldest ideas of my early days, and only now began to reap the benefit of my studies. I read the different European and Asiatic languages without the help of a dictionary, and as in most of them I had had practical experience, I could understand them the more easily, and also write in them. Gradually I had got together a small library of special books, and on account of the lively correspondence I kept up with my fellow-literati and friends of Oriental study, I was enabled to work with energy far from the centre of my studies as linguist, ethnographer, and editor. Now and then the want of intellectual stimulus and personal intercourse with my fellow-labourers made itself felt. I longed particularly for an interchange of ideas with authorities on the East, as in Pest itself I could only meet with a few orthodox scholars of Ural-Altaic comparative philology; but in the zeal and enthusiasm for one's undertaking one easily dispenses with encouragement, and with the device, "*Nulla dies sine linea*," which I always conscientiously followed, I must ultimately reach the goal and overcome all obstacles.

With industry and perseverance, energy and untiring zeal, I could conquer anything except the stupidity of human nature galled by envy. The

more I worked to keep up my literary repute and the repute I had gained as traveller, the more furiously raged my opponents, and the more they endeavoured to discredit me, and to accuse me of all imaginable mistakes and misrepresentations. Once when I complained about this to Baron Eötvös, this noble and high-minded man rightly remarked, "The regions of your travels and studies are unknown in this land, and you cannot expect society to acknowledge its ignorance and incapacity to understand. It is far easier and more comfortable to condemn one whom it does not understand as a liar and a deceiver." Now this was exactly my position; all the same it grieved me to meet with so much opposition on every side. Not in any period of my life, when some public acknowledgment on the part of the Academy or of the newly-established Hungarian Government would have been such a help to one of my almost childish sensitiveness, had I ever received the slightest token of appreciation of my labours. Twelve years after my return from Central Asia I was elected ordinary member of the Academy, and then only after several quite insignificant men had preceded me, and I simply could not be passed over any longer. Others of higher birth, but without any literary pretensions, were made honorary members or even placed on the directing staff. As regards the State's want of appreciation of my work, although I may now look upon it as of no significance, it made me feel very

sore at the time, especially during the Coronation festivities when Hungarian literati and artists were picked out and I was utterly ignored. At other times they were glad enough to distinguish me as the only Magyar who had brought Hungarian knowledge on to the world's stage, and had been instrumental in making the name of the Hungarian Academy known to the Western world. I could give many other proofs of this intentional neglect and ignoring of my claims, but why should I weary the reader any longer with revelations of wounded vanity? The conviction that I had become a stranger in my own land impressed itself more and more upon me; the false position in which I was placed must necessarily become more and more conspicuous. No wonder, then, that I grew indifferent towards the place which formerly had been the object of all my desires, and I now began to long for England, the foreign land where I was better understood and more appreciated, and where I had found more interest in my studies and more encouragement of my efforts.

Nothing, therefore, was more natural than that in these circumstances I should undertake a journey abroad, to cheer and comfort myself by personal contact with congenial society. These motives drew me towards Germany, France, and particularly England. In Germany I made the acquaintance of distinguished Orientalists whose theoretical knowledge excited my admiration as much as their

practical incapacity and awkwardness surprised me. They were kind, modest, worthy men, who, since I was outside their particular set, met me very pleasantly, but they looked very doubtful when I seemed not to be acquainted with their theories or betrayed an insufficient knowledge of their treatises, notes, and glossaries. They listened to me, but I saw at once that they looked upon me as a dilettante, outside the pale of learning. This opinion of my literary accomplishments was not altogether unjust, for I was and remained always a practical Orientalist, and these theorists might have remembered that a mere bookman could not possibly have travelled through so many Islamic lands as Dervish and faced all dangers and vicissitudes in close intercourse with the people.

In France I fared somewhat better. Here the political situation had revealed the necessity of practical knowledge of Asiatic conditions, and side by side with the theoretical guardians of Oriental science there had at all times been a considerable number of practical authorities on Asia, who now received me very warmly. Of the personages with whom I became acquainted in Paris I will mention in the first place Napoleon III., who admitted me to an audience more because it was the fashion than to satisfy his scientific curiosity. When I entered the Tuileries in company with Prince Metternich, then Austrian Ambassador at Paris, and caught sight of the Emperor before the Pavillon de l'Horloge

as he was taking leave of Queen Christina of Spain, the vision of this thick-set man, with his flabby features and pale, faded eyes, made a miserable impression upon me. And still more lamentable was the result of my half-hour's interview with him. He appeared to have been preparing himself for my visit, for on his writing-table, covered with papers and documents, I saw spread out the map which accompanied the English edition of my *Travels*, and, after the usual ceremonies, he told me to sit down by him and began to converse about Hungary. When I remarked that I had undertaken these travels into the interior of Asia at the request of the Academy, the Emperor replied he had heard a good deal in praise of Hungary, and after receiving some information as to the intellectual efforts of Hungary, he led the conversation on to Central Asia. At first he attempted to give the conversation a more scientific character, and, with reference to his *Jules César*, which had just appeared, he began to talk about the ethnical origin of the Parthians. Gradually he dropped into a consideration of the political condition of Central Asia, and put to me the question whether in the Memorandum I had presented to Lord Palmerston I had touched upon the politico-economic relations between Central Asia and India, and wherein lay the danger for England. My explanations did not seem to suit his preconceived notions, for he tried to refute my views as regards the danger to English

interests by pointing out the strong position England held in India, so gloriously maintained in the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, while Russia was only just beginning to make conquests in Central Asia. When I replied that Russia's object was not so much to conquer India, but rather to cripple the English military forces, in order to tie the hands of one of the chief opponents of Russia's designs upon Constantinople, the Emperor was driven into a corner and said: "Such an eventuality is a long way off yet, and as to this point in the Oriental question, there are yet other factors to be considered." Leaving the discussion of politics, which did not seem to please the Emperor, he suddenly turned the conversation again upon my travels, and began to compliment me on my adventures and the linguistic proficiency which had so helped me to success. He said, "You have evidently a great talent for acting, and the fact that you, with your physical weakness (hinting at my lameness), have been able to go through so many fatigues, is altogether astonishing."

I had occasion later on to meet the Emperor in the salon of the Princess Mathilde, but I must honestly say that I could not discern a trace of that greatness of which for years I had heard so much. He could be affable and pleasant; between taciturnity and gravity he simulated the deep thinker, but his pale eyes and artificial speech soon betrayed the adventurer who had been

elevated to his exalted position by the inheritance of a great name and the wantonness of the nation. His minister, Count Drouyn de Lhuys, was somewhat more inquisitive and better informed; but the most interesting personality of my Parisian acquaintance was decidedly the great Guizot, to whom I was introduced in the Rue de Bac at the salon of Madame Mohl. The old gentleman, then in his 78th year, was full of sparkling humour, and his memory was quite marvellous. He seemed to be most amused to hear me hold a lively conversation in various European and Asiatic languages, and he made a point of bringing me in contact with several more nationalities with the object of confusing me. Monsieur Guizot took a warm interest in me; at his suggestion I was invited to the various salons, but all these civilities could not chain me to the Parisian world. In the leading themes, belle lettres, music, and plastic art, I was an ignoramus and had not a word to say; the superfine manners of society worried me, for I missed here the lively interest in things Asiatic which in the London circles, in spite of the no less strict etiquette, was constantly evinced. Men such as Barthélemy de St. Hilaire, Garcin de Tassy, Pavet de Courteille, and other experts, had a strong fascination for me, but generally speaking France left me cold, for I missed even the great cosmopolitan ideas, the lively interest in the movements of mankind in the far-away corners of the globe, and I realised that national

vanity would not so easily admit a stranger to its platform.

On the other side of the Channel it was quite different, and in course of time the oftener I came to England the more I felt at home there, and the closer became the ties of friendship in various classes of society. When in London I was often invited to the provincial towns to give public lectures on some one or other subject of Inner-Asiatic conditions, and thus became acquainted with the principal centres of industry. My lectures were mostly limited to the description of those Central Asiatic lands where I had resided for some considerable time, and dealt with commerce, industry, natural products, and other such practical points. In many places, as, for instance, in Birmingham, I was asked to bring my costume bought in Central Asia, to give the manufacturers an insight into the colour, material, and fashion of the national costume, and, as I learned afterwards, similar goods of English manufacture have since been imported into Bokhara by the way of Afghanistan. In other places again, I had to speak of my travelling adventures in connection with geographical and ethnographical interests, and even in the smallest towns I always found an attentive and interested audience. I also used to touch upon the political side of my travelling experiences, and the more I railed against Russia the louder was the applause. Sometimes there were comical episodes during my lectures.

After I had finished, the public always addressed various questions to me, and once the learned entomologist, Mr. D., asked whether I could not oblige him with some Central Asiatic lice, as he had made a special study of these insects, and was on the point of publishing a large book on the subject. On my reply that in Central Asia I had been in quite too close contact with these creatures, but that now, thank Heaven, there was a great distance between us, the scientist asked whether, perhaps, my Tartar could oblige him with a few specimens. He explained that he had various kinds, Chinese, Siamese, and other lice, but he had not been able to procure any from Central Asia. Again, I had to reply in the negative, but the enthusiastic entomologist would not yet give in. "Could not," he suggested, "a European louse (a Hungarian one in this case) be brought into contact with my Tartar? it would be interesting to note what transformation would take place." Needless to say, I did not perform this charitable duty to science, but this little episode with Mr. D., who soon afterwards published a work in two thick volumes upon *pedicula*, has often amused me. My lectures in England have always had an exhilarating effect upon me. Commencing in 1868, I visited in this manner, with short intervals, many different towns of the United Kingdom. Bath, Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield, Bradford, Leamington, Norwich, Kendal, York, Wakefield, Edinburgh,

Belfast, Halifax, Glasgow, Dundee, Aberdeen, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Brighton, Cardiff, and other places, were visited once, twice, and even oftener. Everywhere I enjoyed the hospitality of the most distinguished and richest inhabitants of the place, and thus I got an insight into the social, religious, ethical, and political standing as well as the prevailing ideas and notions of the British people which increased my admiration and enthusiasm for this remarkable nation. After two years of uninterrupted sojourn in Hungary I always felt the need for what the French call, "me retremper dans l'esprit européen," and to strengthen my nerves and refresh my ideas by a trip to England. Just as on my journey home from the East I felt that step by step I was advancing in Western ways of living and thinking, in Western manners and customs, until they reached their culminating point in England, so also when returning home from thence I felt that each step was bringing me nearer to Eastern notions of life, and to the errors, abuses, and superstitions of the Old World. Year after year I made the same disappointing observation. It always struck me in the same unpleasant manner; and if in spite of all this I did not follow the promptings of my heart to make my permanent home in the centre of Western thought and culture, so much more congenial to my own conceptions of life, the fault lies not with me, but with various external causes. In the first place the immediate contact with these factors of

Western culture, the incessant buzzing and whirring of the machinery, had a stunning and exhausting effect upon me. I realised that this restlessness, this everlasting mad rushing and wrestling was unavoidable and indispensable to the attainment of the object in view, but I preferred to watch the grotesque spectacle from a distance, and to renew my strength by occasional visits to the field of action. In the second place, notwithstanding all the many contradictions and oppositions in which I constantly found myself with my countrymen on account of my different views and notions of life, I clung far too strongly to the soil of my native land to separate myself from it altogether, and finally break with so many homely manners and customs yet dear to me. And in the third place I was a Hungarian and had presented myself to the world as the explorer of the early history and language of my people. As such, an expatriation might reasonably have shed a doubtful light upon my character as man and writer. My fate compelled me to remain at home, to persevere, and to make myself as comfortable as I could in the uncongenial surroundings. A hard struggle, an everlasting self-denial, a constant incognito seemed to be my appointed lot both in Europe and in Asia. Here, as there, my surroundings were foreign and uncongenial to me, and while for many years I accommodated myself to the necessity, and silently bore all manner of mental injuries, I had always

the consolation of work; for in literary occupation I forgot everything else and was supremely happy.

I have often been asked why I did not from a patriotic point of view join the national political endeavours, and take part in the movement of 1867? From a utilitarian point of view, and considering my eminently practical views of life, my entering the Hungarian Parliament seemed to commend itself; but serious considerations held me back. In the first place I had no taste for this career. I had never studied Hungarian law, and my knowledge of the political and economical conditions of the land were far too slight for me to occupy a position as practical Hungarian politician worthy of my ambition. And secondly, if these difficulties could have been overcome, there were yet many other obstacles in the way, which made a successful career such as I desired, practically impossible. In Hungary, and elsewhere on the European Continent, birth and origin play an important part in public life. The saying, "*Boni viri vinique non quæritur origo*," is and always will be only a figure of speech; and although, perhaps, the strong spirit of liberalism which marked the commencement of Hungary's constitutional era might have favoured my ambition—which I doubt, as so far not a single citizen of Jewish extraction has succeeded in becoming a leading statesman—it was not very likely that the highest circles of

Vienna society would brook a breach of their old conservative notions. I was bound to reckon with this circumstance, and as my ambition could tolerate no half measures and limitations, I preferred to keep altogether aloof from the political arena of Hungary.

My Political Career and Position in England

CHAPTER VIII

MY POLITICAL CAREER AND POSITION IN ENGLAND

MANY people have wondered how the various professions of Orientalist, ethnographer, philologist, and political writer could all be united in one and the same person, and that I applied myself to all these literary pursuits has often been made a matter of reproach. Personally, I cannot see either virtue or advantage in this odd mixture of study, but I have gone on with it for years, and I will now shortly mention the reasons which induced me thereto. I have already related how, during my first stay in Constantinople, I became a Press correspondent, and how, through constant intercourse with the political world, I entered the list of writing politicians. My interest in political affairs has never flagged; indeed, it rose and became more active when, on account of my personal experiences in Persia and Central Asia, I became, so to speak, the authority for all such information concerning them as related to the political questions of the day, and

of which even initiated politicians were ignorant. The traveller who keeps his eyes open necessarily takes a practical view of all that goes on in social, political, and intellectual life, and it is perfectly impossible that the wanderer, entirely dependent upon his own resources for years together, and mixing with all classes and ranks of society, should cultivate merely theoretical pursuits. To me the various languages were not merely an object, but also a means, and when one has become practically so familiar with foreign idioms in letter and in speech that one feels almost like a native, one must always retain a lively interest in their respective lands and nations, one shares their weal and woe, and will always feel at home among them. Of course, it is quite another thing for the theoretical traveller, whose object is of a purely philological or archæological nature. To him land and people are secondary matters, and when he has procured the desired theoretical information, and left the scene of operation, he forgets it all the sooner, since he has always remained a stranger to his surroundings, and has always been treated as such.

This could never be the case with me. I had so familiarised myself with Osmanli, Persian, and East Turkish that I was everywhere taken for a native. In those three languages my pen has always been busy up to an advanced age, and I believe there is hardly another European who has kept up such

varied correspondence with Orientalists in distant lands.

When, on my return from Asia, I took part in the discussion of the political questions of the day, and, as eye-witness of current events, was questioned by the leading statesmen of the day, I could not with the best will in the world have escaped entering upon a political career. Lord Palmerston gave me the first incentive by requesting me, through Sir Roderick Murchison, then President of the London Geographical Society, to draw up a memorandum. I did as I was asked, and handed in my report about the position of Russia on the Yaxartes, and the state of political affairs in Central Asia, with the necessary digressions into the regions of Persian and Turkish politics. All this was easy enough to me, for at the Porte I had been an eye-witness of the political movements. I had already been actively employed as political correspondent, and both in Teheran and in Constantinople I had constantly been in contact with the diplomatic circles. During the many interviews which Lord Palmerston granted me, he always took all my remarks jokingly, and never appeared the serious diplomatist. He told me that I looked at things through the spectacles of anti-Russian patriotic Magyarism, that Hungarians and Poles were hot-brained, and that the Thames would discharge a good deal more water before the Cossacks watered their horses at the Oxus. When,

a few months after my arrival in London, the news came of the taking of Tashkend by Chernayeff, and soon after the celebrated Note of Gorchakoff was presented at Downing Street, the jocular character of the English Premier toned down somewhat. In influential political circles I was questioned more frequently about the defensive strength of the Emir of Bokhara, about the high-roads, and the public opinion of the Central Asiatics. But even then Lord Palmerston, always cheerful in spite of his advanced age, would not allow his real motives to transpire. He feigned an Olympic quietness or an icy indifference, and the only sign of interest he showed me was his encouragement to continue writing my letters to the *Times*, and to enlighten the English public concerning the land and the people of Central Asia.

But the press and the public in England behaved quite differently. The great majority, of course, was optimistic. The terror of the Afghan Campaign in 1842 still filled all hearts with dismay, and after the unsuccessful termination of the Crimean War they easily drifted into the Ostrich policy, said that the advance of Russia towards the frontiers of India was a chimera, and laughed at my firm and consistent assertions that there was danger threatening from the side of Russia. If I were now to publish all the newspaper articles, essays, and parliamentary speeches which appeared at the time to contradict my views, and to pacify the public in England and

India, it would display indeed a sad picture of self-deception and a wilful lulling to sleep in fancied security. On my side were only a few staunch Conservatives, since this party, decidedly anti-Russian, had stood out for an energetic policy; but personally I took no notice either of the indifference of the masses or of the scorn and mockery of the optimists. The more they laughed at my ideas the more fervently and zealously did I defend them. I spared neither time nor trouble to bring forward the most striking proofs. I kept up my relations with Central Asia and Persia by constant correspondence. I read the Russian papers industriously, and so I had always an important weapon of defence at hand. The columns of the *Times* and the fashionable monthly and weekly periodicals were open to me, and I had little difficulty in displaying such activity in writing as would impress even my political opponents, and finally break down the indifference of the great reading public. Many looked upon me as a Magyar thirsting for revenge on Russia, others again were pleased to find in me, a foreigner, a zealous defender of British State interests; and this caused the more surprise, as such concern for foreign State interests is always a rarity, and in England, much envied and little beloved on the Continent, had never been heard of before. Had I been seeking to obtain a public appointment in England, and had I settled there, no doubt my efforts would have appeared in quite

another light, and the attention and subsequent acclamation I received would doubtless have been pitched in a lower key. But since, in my humble function of professor, I abode in Hungary, and as a foreigner continued in a foreign land, without ostentation or hope of material preferment, to carry on the defence of British interests on the Continent of Europe, and even persevered in influencing public opinion in England itself, I succeeded in banishing all suspicion of self-interest, and finally in disarming even the bitterest political opponents. Amongst the few who particularly disliked my political energy was Mr. Gladstone, the zealous advocate of an Anglo-Russian alliance in Church and politics. And yet I have been told that he had remarked to a friend, "Professor Vambéry's agitation seemed at first suspicious to me, but since I have heard that he is a poor man I believe in his fanaticism." The insular separatist, the proud Englander, had in the end to submit to a foreigner mixing himself up with his national concerns, giving his unbidden opinion about Great Britain's foreign policy, and finally, by dint of perseverance, influencing public opinion in England.

Of course all this was not the work of a few weeks or months, but of a whole series of years. Between 1865 and 1885 I published a quantity of letters, articles, and essays on political and politico-economic affairs in Central Asia, Persia,

and Turkey in English, German, French, Hungarian, and American periodicals, which, if collected, would make several volumes. In England it was chiefly in the *Times*, and sometimes in other daily papers, as also in periodicals such as the *Nineteenth Century*, the *Fortnightly Review*, the *National Review*, *Army and Navy Gazette*, the *New Review*, the *Journal of the Society of Arts*, the *Asiatic Quarterly Review*, the *Leisure Hour*, and *Good Words*. In Germany I wrote in the *Münchener* (formerly *Augsburger*) *Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Unsere Zeit*, *Die Deutsche Rundschau*, *Die Deutsche Revue*, *Welthandel*, and in a few other daily and monthly papers, long since discontinued. In Austro-Hungary I often wrote in the *Pester Lloyd*, but only seldom in the *Neue Freie Presse* and in the *Monatschrift für den Orient*, while in France I contributed to the *Revue des deux Mondes*, and in America to the *Forum* and the *North American Review*. Only when the Central Asiatic question became acute—as, for instance, on the occasion of the taking of Samarkand in 1868, the campaign against Khiva in 1873, the conquest of Khokand in 1876, and the Pendjdeh affair—was my pen in actual request. For the rest I had to force myself upon the public, and not only on the Continent, but in England also, I often had difficulty in getting a hearing. As long as the Russians had not so far consolidated their power that it was dangerous for foreign travellers to be admitted in the conquered

districts I was able to maintain myself as chief and only authority on Central Asiatic affairs. Later I had gradually to relinquish this privilege. The number of writers versed in Central Asiatic concerns constantly increased, but my knowledge of the Oriental and Russian languages, and also my prolonged and intimate acquaintance with the theme, always gave me a certain amount of advantage over my literary competitors. From time to time, when the Central Asiatic question came to the foreground, I entered the arena with larger, more substantial essays. Thus, for instance, my *Power of Russia in Asia*, which appeared in German and Hungarian, depicted the gradual progress of the Russian conquests in Asia. As foundation for my article I used MacNeil's *The Progress and Present Position of Russia in the East*, which appeared at the time of the Crimean War. This I elaborated with new facts and data. Like my predecessor, I preached then (1871) to deaf ears. People troubled themselves very little about Russia's Asiatic politics. They called me a blinded Russophobe, and now—since the Northern Colossus has thrown his polyp-like arm over the half of Asia, and is looked upon as the peace-breaker of the Western world—when I remember the scornful laughter of the great politicians, I cannot help thinking what a pity it was that timely precautions were not taken to ward off the coming danger, and that people did not realise that the power gained in Asia might one

day stand Russia in good stead in its dealings with Europe.

The second independent book about political matters which I brought out was entitled, *Central Asia and the Anglo-Russian Frontier Question*, published in English and German. It was, correctly speaking, a collection of my different political articles published in various periodicals. This book, coming out at the time of the Khiva campaign, when people showed a much keener interest in what took place in the inner Asiatic world, found a good sale, and although not of much material advantage to me, gave me a good deal of moral encouragement.

Of great effect was my article about *The Coming Struggle for India*, published in 1885, at the time when the question of the rivalry between the two Colossi in Asia had reached a seething-point, and after the affair at Pendjdeh nearly involved England and Russia in a war. This booklet, which I wrote in twenty days, and issued simultaneously in English, French, German, Swedish, and Guzerati (East Indian language), caused a great sensation far beyond its intrinsic worth. It proved also a lucrative speculation.

The Coming Struggle for India, which was the English title of the book, brought me quite a stream of commendatory grateful letters from England, America, and Australia; I was eulogised as a prophet, and held up as an English patriot whose merits would never be forgotten nor too

highly thought of in Albion. On this occasion I also received some less flattering communications from English Socialists and Anarchists, who in the first place reproached me with interfering in the affairs of their country, and in the second place endeavoured to prove how unjust and inhuman it was for England to waste life and money on the civilising and conquest of foreign nations, while at home hundreds of thousands of their compatriots were perishing of poverty and distress. The colonial policy enriches the aristocrats who revel in luxury, while the labourer, oppressed by the capitalist, is left to starve. Thus complained one of my unbidden correspondents.

The middle classes and the aristocracy of England thought differently, however. Regardless of all scornful and derisive remarks I had now for twenty years pursued my political campaign with unremitting zeal, and had always had the interest of England at heart. Many, therefore, looked upon me as a true friend, and although I was stamped by some as a fanatic, an Anglomaniac, or even a fool, the majority saw in me a writer who honestly deserved the respect and recognition of the country ; a man who in spite of his foreign extraction should be honoured as a promoter of Great Britain's might and power. Cold, proud, and reserved as the Britisher generally appears before strangers, I must confess that at my public appearances both in London and in the provinces I have always

been received with the utmost cordiality and warmth.

Many were struck with the pro-English spirit of my writings, and I have frequently been asked how it was that I, far from the scene of action, was often more quickly and better informed about current events than the English Government which had Embassies and secret agencies at its disposal. The reason is clear enough. In the first place I had personal experiences at my disposal, and, supported by my correspondents in the Far East, many of my views have thus in course of time been justified by events. Secondly, I had paid far greater attention to the communications of the Russian press than the politicians in England, where the Russian language was not much known yet. I was surprised myself to find that my political activity was even discussed in the English Parliament and led to interpellations. On the 22nd of May, 1870, Mr. Eastwick asked the Government: "Whether there was any truth in the rumours, mentioned in Mr. Vambéry's letter published in the *Times* on the 18th of this month, that Herat had been taken by Yakub Khan?" Lord Enfield, then Secretary of State, denied my statement; nevertheless I was right, for Herat was actually in the hands of the rebel son of Shir Ali Khan. On the 3rd of June, 1875, Mr. Hanbury asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, "Whether his (the minister's) attention had been called to a letter of Mr. Vambéry's in the *Times* of the 2nd of

June relating to a new Russian expedition to hitherto unknown districts of the Upper Oxus; whether the purpose of the expedition had been communicated to the English Government, and whether, as stated by Mr. Vambéry, the diplomatist, Mr. Weinberg, was a member of the expedition, and whether it was of a political as well as of a scientific character?" To this Mr. Bourke, then Secretary of State, replied in Parliament: "That he had read Mr. Vambéry's letter with great interest, but that Government had not yet received any information regarding the matter therein mentioned." Again I was on the right side and had the priority in point of information; thus naturally the weight of my writings continually increased.

Without desiring or seeking it I was acknowledged in England as the Asiatic politician and the staunch friend of the realm. Year after year I received invitations to give lectures about the present and the future condition of England in Asia, and when, tired of writing, I longed for a little change and recreation, I travelled to England, where in various towns—London, Manchester, Birmingham, Bradford, Sheffield, Leeds, Edinburgh, Glasgow, &c.—I gave lectures for a modest honorarium. On these occasions I drew the attention of the public to their commercial and political interests in the Orient, and urged them to exercise their civilising influence over Asia. Foreigners who for years together concern them-

selves about the weal or woe of a land not their own belong certainly to the rarities, and consequently I was received everywhere in England with open arms and made much of by all classes of society.

This was very patent during the critical time in the spring of 1885, and the ovations I received in London and other towns of the United Kingdom I shall never forget. On the 2nd of May I gave a lecture in the great hall of Exeter Hall about the importance of Herat. On my arrival I found the house full to overflowing with a very select audience. Lord Houghton, who presided at this meeting, thanked me in the name of the nation, and the next day almost all the newspapers had leading articles about the services I had rendered, and the resoluteness with which I always met the woeful optimism and blunders of leading politicians led astray by party spirit.

A few days later I spoke under the auspices of the Constitutional Union, before an aristocratic Conservative gathering in Willis's Rooms, on the subject, "England and Russia in Afghanistan, or who shall be lord and master in Asia?" The heads of English aristocracy were present, and when on the platform behind me I recognised a duke, many lords, marshals, generals, ex-ministers, and several famous politicians and writers of Great Britain I was really overcome.

My thoughts wandered back into the past. I

remembered the chill autumn night, which I, a beggar, spent under the seat on the promenade at Presburg. I thought of the scorn, the contempt, and the misery to which I had been exposed as the little Jew boy and the hungry student, and comparing the miserable past with the brilliant present, I could not help marvelling at the strange dispensations of fate. Modesty forbids me to speak of the manner in which Lord Hamilton, Lord Napier of Magdala, Lord Cranbrook, and others expressed themselves both before and after my lecture about my person and my work, but I repeat it, my modesty is not the feigned, hateful modesty of the craft. Suffice it to say that I had the satisfaction of warning the proud English aristocracy against the sinful optimism of the Liberals then in power. If this episode stands out as the crowning point of my political labours it also shows the magnanimity and noble-mindedness of the Englishman (so often condemned for his insular pride) where it concerns the impartial acknowledgment of merit and the interests of his fatherland!

In the zeal with which I had taken up the political questions of England all these points did not present themselves to me till afterwards. There was one incident with regard to this matter which deserves mention. When, after the conclusion of the last Afghan War, 1880, the Liberal party came into power, they did all they could to upset the politics of their opponents, and decided to give back

to the Afghans the important frontier station, Kandahar. I then addressed an open letter to Lord Lytton, at that time Viceroy of India, in which I warned him against this step, and pointed out the danger which would ensue. This letter was reproduced by the whole Press, and a few days after I read in the German papers the following despatch :

"LONDON, *22nd February.*

"An important meeting being held to-day in favour of the continuance of the occupation of Kandahar, a letter of Vambéry's to Lytton has come very opportunely. It is therein stated that to give up Kandahar would do irreparable damage to England's prestige in Asia, for the Asiatics could look upon it only as a sign of weakness. Vambéry further asserts that the occupation of Kandahar under safe conditions would decidedly not show a deficit, but, on the contrary, be profitable to India, for the Kandaharis are the best traders of all Central Asia. Finally, Vambéry points out that the Russians, even without the occupation of Merv, would within a few years stand before the gates of Kandahar."

Lord Lytton himself wrote to me as follows about this matter :—

"KNEBWORTH PARK,
"STEVENAGE, HERTS,
"*February* 22, 1885.

"DEAR PROFESSOR VAMBÉRY, — "I am very much obliged to you for your interesting and

valuable letter about Kandahar, and you have increased my obligation by your permission to publish it, of which I have availed myself. I little thought, when I had the honour of making your acquaintance many years ago at Lord Houghton's [*see* p. 255], that I should live to need and receive your valued aid in endeavouring to save England's Empire in the East from the only form of death against which not even the gods themselves can guard their favourites—death by suicide. I fear, however, that its present guardians, who have Moses and the prophets, are not likely to be converted—even by one of the dead. At least, the only form of conversion to which they seem disposed, is one which threatens to reverse the boast of Themistocles by converting a great Power into a little one.

"Believe me, dear Professor Vambéry,

"Very sincerely yours,

"LYTTON."

In non-English Europe great statesmen seldom or never condescend to write in such terms to mere journalists! And where such encouragements, characteristic of a free nation, are bestowed on the ambitious writer, they urge him on with still greater enthusiasm. And, further, what must be the feelings of the writer who knows all about England's glorious doings in Asia, and from his earliest youth has dreamed of political freedom; who, hampered

hitherto by the mediæval prejudices still prevalent in Austria, finds himself all at once able to move and act without restraint, and has not to be ashamed of his low birth? One may say what one likes against the English (and they have no doubt some very glaring faults), but this one thing must be allowed—before all things they are men, and only after that are they British. In the enlightened nineteenth century they have made more progress than any, and a part such as that played by Disraeli and others would be perfectly impossible not only in Germany and Austro-Hungary—still more or less imbued with the spirit of mediævalism—but even in liberty-boasting France. And I further ask who could possibly remain indifferent while keenly watching the *rôle* played on the world's stage by this small group of islands, how it rules over several hundred millions of people of all colours, tongues, and religions, and educates them up to better things!

This extraordinary and almost phenomenal energy must surely excite the admiration of any thinking man interested in the history of humanity. When even Rome in the zenith of its glory impresses us with the magnitude of its power, how could the actions and operations of Albion, so infinitely greater, mightier and more impressive, leave us indifferent? These and similar ideas from the very first attracted me towards England; I felt interested in all her doings, and when it came to the question

of the Anglo-Russian rivalry in Asia, I naturally always took the side of England. Besides, could I, or dare I, have acted differently considering the outrageous interference of Russia in the Hungarian struggle for independence in 1848, and also mindful of the fact that the government of the Czar, that frightful instrument of tyranny, that pool of all imaginable slander and abuse, that disgrace to humanity, must on no account be strengthened and supported in its thirst for conquest? In proportion as the dominion of the Czar grows in Asia, so do his means increase for checking the liberty of Europe, and the easier will it be for Russia to perform acts of benevolence and friendship towards those of our sovereigns who long for absolutism. England's greatness can never damage, but rather profit us; as the worthy torch-bearer of nineteenth-century culture no liberal-minded man will follow her successful operations in Asia with envious eyes.

And so my literary activity was a thorn in the eyes of the cunning Muscovites, and the ways and means they used to counteract it are not without interest. One day in Pest I received a visit from a well-known Russian statesman, who introduced himself to me with the following remark, "When the great Greek General fled to Persia, he presented himself before Cyrus the greatest enemy of the Greeks. I have come to Hungary to pay my respects to you." Of course I received him

as pleasantly as possible, and when the wily diplomatist looked round my poor abode he remarked with a smile, "You work a great deal, and yet you do not appear to be very well off. *You would probably be in better circumstances if you did not work so much.*" I replied, also with a smile, that I had accustomed myself to a Dervish life in Asia, that it suited me admirably both morally and physically, and that with reference to the intellectual result, I felt no desire or need to make any change. "Just so," remarked the Muscovite, looking me straight in the face, and soon turned the conversation on to other subjects. Various other attempts were made to turn me aside from the path I pursued and to discredit me in the eyes of England and of the Continent. But their trouble was all in vain, for the bitter hostility of a despotic Government and their venomous darts must remain without effect against the expressed approval of a free nation and the approbation of the whole liberal West.

In the spring of 1885, during my stay in London, I received invitations to various other towns. A war between England and Russia was then pending in consequence of the Pendjdeh affair. The number of letters and telegrams I daily received became so numerous, that I could only master them with the assistance of a private secretary, who had offered his services gratis, from purely patriotic motives. I accepted invitations only to some of the

principal provincial towns, as the labour of travelling every day to be honoured every evening with a public reception in a different place, give a lecture and attend a banquet, was too tiring and proved too much for my physical strength. As the most memorable evenings of this tour I would mention my *début* at Newcastle-on-Tyne and at Brighton. In the first-named great industrial town of the North of England, I gave my lecture, or rather my discourse, in the large theatre. The house was filled to the top, one could have walked over the heads, and the galleries were full to overflowing. Tailor's apprentice, servant, tutor, Effendi, Dervish, I have been pretty well everything in my life, but a stage hero I was now to be for the first time, and although not seized with the fever of the footlights, the masses before me and their enthusiastic reception had an unusual effect upon me. I spoke for an hour and a half, often interrupted for several minutes at a time by loud applause, and when, referring to the danger which threatened the Indian Empire, I called out to my audience, "The spirits of the heroes fallen in the struggle for India, who have enabled this small island to found one of the greatest Asiatic Empires, who have made you mighty and rich, their spirits ask you now, Will you allow the fruits of our labour to perish, and the most precious pearl of the British crown to fall into the enemy's hand?" the frantic, "No! No!" from all parts of the house almost moved me to tears,

and I saw with astonishment what a pitch of excitement these people of the foggy North can be led up to. A similar scene awaited me at Brighton, where my speech had also a wonderful effect upon my hearers. At the close of the lecture many, as usual, pressed forward on to the platform to shake hands. Among others an elegantly dressed, elderly lady came up to me, took both my hands and said in a choking voice: "Oh, my dear, precious England, you have indeed done it good service. Sir, it is a glorious, golden land; continue to promote its welfare; God in heaven will reward you." The poor woman trembled as she said this, and as long as I live I shall never forget the look of agitation depicted on her face.

I must not omit to mention some of the very characteristic proofs of friendship I received on this lecturing tour from private individuals hitherto absolutely unknown to me. At several railway stations the door of my compartment suddenly opened and dainty luncheon baskets plentifully filled were pushed in with inscriptions such as: "From an admirer," or, "from a grateful Englishman." The most remarkable of all these tokens of appreciation was the hospitality shown me by Mr. Russell Shaw in London. He offered it me by letter in Budapest, and on my arrival in London I was met at the station by a footman, who handed me a letter, in which Mr. Shaw put his carriage at my disposal. The footman looked after my luggage, we drove to

the West End, stopped at No. 26, Sackville Street, and I was led to the richly furnished apartments made ready for my reception. Here I found everything that could make me comfortable; the finest cigars, liqueurs, a beautiful writing-table, stamps, &c.; everything was put at my disposal, and I had scarcely finished my toilet when the cook came to ask what were my favourite dishes, and what time I wished to lunch and to dine. Not until afternoon did my host appear, after he had begged permission to introduce himself. Of course I received Mr. Shaw in the most friendly manner in his own house. He left me after having asked me to invite as many guests as I liked, and freely to dispose of his kitchen, cellar, and carriage. For three weeks I remained in this hospitable house. Mr. Shaw hardly ever showed himself, and only on the day of my departure he paid me another visit, asked if I had been comfortable and satisfied about everything, and, wishing me a prosperous journey, he left me. I have never seen him again. He was unquestionably a true type of English amiability!

Is it surprising, then, that these and other spontaneous expressions of appreciation made my political labours appear to me in quite a different light from what I had ever thought or expected? I realised, of course, that it was not only my political writings which made me of so much weight, but that it was founded on my purely scientific labours, which, although unknown to the public at large, had

won me credit with the influential and governing circles of England. Political writings, after all, can only be appreciated as an excursion from the regions of more serious literature ; and just as newspaper writing in itself is naturally not highly rated, so strictly and exclusively theoretical writing bears rather too often the character of sterility. True, not every science can be animated and popularised by practical application, but when the study has to be kept alive by active intercourse with far distant nations, politics, as the connecting link between theory and practice, become an absolute necessity, and the lighter literary occupation is as unavoidable as it is energising and beneficial in its effect upon the mind.

After I had spent a few hours with comparative grammars and text-editions, or had been occupied with purely ethnographical studies, I always felt a desire to write a newspaper article, and to refresh myself from the monotony of word-sifting in the field of political speculation. The best time of the day, that is to say, the morning hours, I spent exclusively in serious study, and at the age between thirty and fifty I could also devote a few hours in the evening to graver study. In the forenoon, between ten and twelve, and in the afternoon, between two and five, I used to apply myself to politics and journalism, with the help of a secretary. Through practice and custom I had now got so far that I could dictate two or even three leading articles

or other matters in different languages at the same time. When I approached the fifties, however, such *tours de force* gave me headaches and congestion, and I had to abandon them ; but long after I had passed the fifties I continued to dictate extempore—in fact, I generally wrote and worked from memory even in my scientific studies. Except the notes I wrote down during my Dervish tour in Arabic letters and in the Hungarian language, I have never had a notebook, and consequently never collected notes for future writings. Of course as was the material, so was the work produced, and it would be arrant self-deceit to try to conceal the blunders and defects under which so many of my literary productions laboured because of my mode of working. No, vanity has not altogether blinded me. Uncommon and curious as my schooling had been, equally curious was my subsequent literary productivity, and if there be anything to make me reflect with satisfaction upon those twenty years of literary activity, it is my untiring zeal and the strict adherence to my device "*Nulla dies sine linea*," in which I spent the beautiful summer of my life. Nothing of any kind or description either in my private or public life has ever made me break this rule, and no pleasures of any kind could ever replace for me the sweet hours of study or deter me from my once formed resolution.

I had the good fortune never to have sought or known what is vulgarly called entertainment, re-

creation, or diversion. As in the years of my trying apprenticeship I had to spend eight or ten hours a day in teaching, and devoted six hours to my private studies, so, thanks to my perfectly healthy constitution, I have been able till close upon the sixties to work at first for ten and later on for six hours daily, apart from the time spent in reading the newspapers and scientific periodicals. During the whole of my life I have only very rarely visited the theatre, and concerts were not in my line either, as I had no knowledge of the higher art of music. Social evenings, where I might have refreshed myself in conversation with my fellow-labourers, and have profited by an interchange of ideas, would have been very welcome to me, but in my native land, where society had only political aspirations and ideals at heart, there was no one who cared for the practical science of the East, no one interested in the actual condition of Asia, and with the few scholars, mostly philologists, who in the evenings used to frequent the ale-houses, I could not associate, because spirituous drinks and excess of any kind have always been obnoxious to me. A home— a "sweet home"—in the English sense of the word, has never fallen to my lot, even on ever so modest a scale, for my wife, a homely, kind-hearted, and excellent woman, was ill for many years, and if it had not been for the beautiful boy with whom she presented me, I should never have known what domestic happiness was. My study

and my library were the stronghold of my worldly bliss, the fortress from which I looked upon three continents, and by a lively correspondence with various lands in Europe, Asia, and America, could maintain my personal and scientific relationships. Mentally I lived continually in the most diverse lands and tongues, and through my correspondence with Turks, Persians, Ozbegs, Kirgizes, Germans, French, English, and Americans, I could remain conversant with the different idioms, and also continually be initiated in the smallest details of the political, commercial, and religious relationships of those distant lands. My post was, as it were, the link of union between the distant regions in which I had lived, and where I always loved to dwell in fancy.

I attribute it more to this than to my inborn linguistic talent, that after more than a quarter of a century I was able to speak correctly and fluently the various Asiatic and European languages. Hungarian, German, Slovak (Slav), Serbian, Turkish, Tartar, Persian, French, Italian, and English were all equally familiar to me, and the greater or lesser perfection of accent and of syntactic forms depended chiefly upon the longer or shorter practice I had had in speaking with natives. I cannot say the same for the writing in these languages. Here the Latin proverb, "*Quot linguas calles, tot homines vales,*" did not hold good, for although I could write in several lan-

guages, I cannot say that I could write any one language ready for the Press, *i.e.*, without any mistakes. In former days I used to write Hungarian a good deal and fairly well. But afterwards I wrote mostly in German and English, and all that I have published since 1864 has been written in one or other of these two languages. In order to obtain more fluency of expression, *i.e.*, to feel more at home in a foreign tongue, I used at one time to read for half an hour or more a day in the particular language. Thus I became familiar with the manner of speaking, or rather the peculiarities of expression in that tongue, and when I had thus learned to think fluently in English, German, or Turkish, I also managed to obtain a certain amount of fluency in writing. I fear there can be no question with me of a mother-tongue, and the argument that the language in which one involuntarily thinks is one's real mother-tongue I cannot agree with, were it only for this one reason, that long practice and custom enabled me to think in any language with which I had been familiarised for some length of time. From my earliest youth I had read a good deal of German. I had studied in that language; and afterwards in Hungary of all foreign languages I came most in contact with German, and it seemed to come most easy to me. But afterwards I wrote English quite as easily—that is to say, after I had spent a few weeks in England, and although I never got so far as to be taken for a native, as was

the case with Turkish, French, German, and Persian, I had the satisfaction of reading in the criticisms at the time that the absence of the foreign accent in my conversation and my idiomatic style were remarkable.

From these observations about the linguistic conditions and changes during the fairly long term of my literary activity I will now pass on to a subject which has given rise to various conjectures in the circle of my acquaintance, and will not be without interest to the general reader. I refer to the material benefits derived from my literary labours, which, on account of their many-sidedness, and the international character of my pen, have been considerably overrated. I have already mentioned how much I made by my first book of travels published by Murray, and expressed at the time the bitter disappointment I experienced, how different was what I had hoped for and what I got. Subsequent English publications fared not much better; none of them brought me in more than £200 sterling, most of them barely half that sum. In Germany the honorarium paid for literary work was still poorer and closer, and 500 thaler (£75) was the highest sum ever paid me for any of my popular writings. I purposely say "popular," because for purely scientific works I received nothing, and my two volumes of Chagataic and Uiguric studies and my "Sheibaniade" alone have cost me some thousand florins, not reckoning the ex-

penses incurred with my *Ursprung der Magyaren* and *Türkenvolk*, for which I never received a penny.

Journalism was a good deal more profitable, especially in England, where some periodicals paid twenty or thirty guineas per sheet. I came to the conclusion that one hour of English article-writing pays better than six hours of German literary work, with this difference, however, that German periodicals lend themselves to the most theoretical, widely speculative subjects, while the English Reviews, in their eagerness for *matter of fact*, accept only practically written articles of immediate interest. German Review literature seems only lately to have realised that it is possible to write essays about serious matters without wearying the reader with a heavy style and endless notes, and one frequently meets now in the German periodicals with attractively written articles about the political and commercial relations of distant countries and people.

This was not the case when I began my literary career. German Orientalists, unquestionably the most learned and solid in the world, have always occupied themselves preferably with the past of the Asiatic civilised world, with textual criticisms of well-known classical works and grammatical niceties in the Semitic and Aryan tongues, while the practical knowledge of the East, until quite lately, for want of national political interest, was not at all encouraged. England, on the other hand, on account

of her Indian Empire, and her many commercial ties all over the Asiatic continent, has for long enough evinced a lively interest in the manners and customs of the Orientals, and since English writers have dealt largely with these, the general public has been interested mostly in this branch of Oriental literature. Of course the former traveller, once retired into his library, cannot so easily come forward with new practical suggestions. It is but seldom that he can offer a new contribution, and in spite of the excellent honorarium, the productions of his pen become gradually less, and do not give him a secured existence as is the case, for instance, with literary writers, or scholars who can write in an interesting and popular style upon some subject which is of all-engrossing interest in everyday life.

Taking everything into consideration, I must look upon my many years of literary labour only from the moral standpoint, and as such my reward has been rich and abundant. A collection of criticisms and discussions, which, quite accidentally, came into my possession, contains very nearly two hundred articles in German, French, English, Italian, Hungarian, Turkish, Russian, and Modern Greek, which make laudatory mention of my literary work. The number of criticisms of which I have never heard may possibly run into many hundreds more; witness the many letters I have received from all parts of the world, and which on the whole have

rather burdened than edified me. In spite of gross mistakes and many shortcomings, my literary labour has secured me a position far beyond my boldest expectations, and would justify the saying, "*Et voluisse sat est.*" Work has kept me in good health, it has made me happy and therefore rich, and work is consequently to my mind the greatest benefactor and the greatest blessing in the world.

The Triumph of my Labours

CHAPTER IX

THE TRIUMPH OF MY LABOURS

From reading the preceding pages the reader will easily gather how it was that, after so many years of hard fighting and struggling, my labour brought its own triumph and gave me the gratification of my dearest wishes.

The psychological problem is clear enough, and the solution is not hard. Other children of men, animated by a desire to produce something new, give themselves neither rest nor peace in the pursuit of their object, but they hide the true motive which instigates them under a mask of modesty; they pretend to be the unwilling instruments of fate. I frankly admit that what animated me was the indomitable ambition to do something out of the common, something that would make me famous. I think I must have been born with this fire in my veins, this devil in my flesh. The confession brings no blush of shame to my face, for now in my seventieth year, looking back upon the thorny path of my life, I am fully convinced it was

this longing for fame and the insatiable thirst for activity in the early stages of my career which were at the bottom of all the inconsistencies of my life. On the one hand, the desire to put to some practical use the experience and the knowledge I had gained urged me on to take an active part in whatever was going on in Europe or Asia, while, on the other, my natural propensities, or, perhaps more correctly, the poverty and simplicity of my bringing up, made me lean more towards a quiet, contemplative life and the retirement of my own study. The severe rules of etiquette and the demands of society, where everybody is so important in his own eyes, have ever been distasteful to me, and often when I mixed with the leading people of the diplomatic world or of high life I felt wearied with the empty talk and hollow, would-be importance of these folks. These feelings were not calculated to fit me for a diplomatic career, for, notwithstanding my eminently practical turn of mind, I was anything but a man of the world.

Possibly—in fact, probably—these feelings would have become considerably modified in process of time if at the commencement of my public life, *i.e.*, on my return from Central Asia, I had had the chance of entering upon an active career instead of contenting myself with purely scientific pursuits. I had always had a secret longing for public activity, as I mentioned before, but at that time insurmountable obstacles and difficulties stood in

my way. In England I was certainly a *distinguished foreigner*, but still I was a foreigner, and not likely to receive the nation's unreserved confidence in important matters of State. In Austria every chance of coming to the front was cut off for me by ancient prejudices; and as for Hungary, its foreign affairs being entirely managed in Vienna, there can even to this day be no question of diplomatic activity. In bureaucratic and nobility-crazed Prussia the prejudices against plebeian descent had already been somewhat mitigated, and in so far overcome that the Iron Chancellor found for nearly all German travellers who had gained experience in foreign lands some employment in the diplomatic service. Nachtigal and Rohlfs have been entrusted with missions to West and North Africa, for Emin Pasha there was a regular fight, and Brugsch, who in company with Minutoli made only one journey to Persia, was appointed First Secretary to the German Embassy at Teheran. In spite of my excellent reception in England and the rest of Europe, in spite of my energetic publicistic activity in Asiatic politics, I was so absolutely unknown in Austria that when the Ministry for War once had the unlucky idea of publishing a map of Central Asia, obtained by secret means, and wanted to have it revised by an expert, they submitted it to Kiepert in Berlin. He advised the gentlemen in Vienna to refer the matter to one of their compatriots who had visited the scene, and only after

that the Military Geographical Institute thought of me. This wilful and persistent ignoring of me lasted for several years. When Austria sent its first Embassy to Teheran, and the Press mentioned my name, an application of mine met with the reply that I had not and could not come into consideration, because in point of social rank I was not even a *Truchsess* (*i.e.* chairbearer) at court; and yet, as I learned afterwards, the Shah and his Government had received the newspaper report with pleasure. When Austria, before the Bosnian occupation, sent a mission to Constantinople to intercede for an amicable settlement of this affair, nobody thought of me, although, as was afterwards clearly shown by my personal intercourse with Sultan Abdul Hamid, no one could more easily than I have brought about a conciliation, saving the country thousands of human lives and millions of money, which the occupation campaign ultimately claimed. At the critical period of the last Russo-Turkish War it was considered advisable for the country to be represented at the Bosphorus by a non-diplomatic ambassador. The choice fell on an aristocrat held to be exceptionally cunning and clever, who before this was supposed to have displayed his sagacity in various ways; but of Oriental affairs he had not the faintest notion, and through ignorance and simplicity he committed some gross mistakes. The fact that my many years' personal intercourse with the Porte, my

familiarity with the national customs, languages, and conditions, and my personal acquaintance with the Sultan, might have served the country far better, never entered anybody's mind; not even my own countryman, Count Andrássy, who was then at the head of foreign affairs, thought of me. Ridiculous! The very idea of it would have been preposterous in the eyes of Austria. A Jew, a plebeian by birth, how could he be admitted into the diplomatic service? Knowledge and experience are of second or third-rate importance; and as for literary proclivities, these had always been looked upon rather as a crime than a virtue in Austria. Birth, position, rank, and the art of dissimulation and cringing are worth more than all knowledge, and the proverbial stupidity of Austria's diplomacy best illustrates how strongly this mediæval spirit has asserted itself there.

In these circumstances it would have been only reasonable if, after settling down in Austro-Hungary as a writer, I devoted myself henceforth solely to literary pursuits. Quietly seated at my writing-table I learned to appreciate the sweet fruits of liberty and independence. Here I was safe against the chicaneries and whims of superior persons and the constraint of social forms; the moral reward which honest work never withholds was worth more to me than all the vain glamour of rank and position coveted by all the world round me. Without wishing it, perhaps against my own will, the force

of circumstances finally landed me on the right track, and I found a vocation more in keeping with my past career. An active participation in Asiatic affairs might possibly have made me richer and more noted, but certainly not happier or more contented, for although I am not blind to the fact that literary fame can never, either with the public at large or in the higher circles, boast of the same recognition which birth and position claim as their due, I have nevertheless noticed with satisfaction that the fruit of intellectual labour is more real and lasting, more worth fighting for than all the pomp and vanity people are so fond of displaying. Whatever may be said in disparagement of writing, it remains true that the pen is a power, and its victories greater, more durable, and nobler than the advantages which other careers, be they ever so brilliant, have to offer. The pen needs not the gracious nod of high personages; it depends on none save on the hand that wields it; and if, in the face of the amount of general and light literature produced in our days, some might incline to think that the pen has lost its power, that its influence is gone, and that for a writer to rise from obscurity and the lowest position to the pedestal of esteem and appreciation is no longer possible, the story of my life will help to reveal the fallacy of such views. Even as the strenuous labour of my younger days raised me, the quondam servant and Jewish teacher, to attract the attention of all cultured Europe, even

so my unremittent efforts in literary work have secured me a position far beyond my merits and surpassing my wildest expectations.

I have already mentioned the widespread popularity of my writings, extending over three continents; I will only add here that, with regard to some exclusively literary works, certain circles—not ordinarily given to express admiration—could not help expressing their appreciation of them, and the Press of England, which for years had laughed at my political utterances, had at last ruefully to admit that I was right, that I had rendered the State great service, and that I had contributed many a brick to the building up of the wall of defence around the Indian Empire. During a lecture which I delivered in 1889 in Exeter Hall the late Commander-in-Chief of India, Sir Donald Stewart, remarked that my writings had often stimulated the sinking courage of the officers in India and stirred them up to endure to the end. Frequently I received letters of appreciation from various parts of India thanking me for my watchfulness over occurrences in Central Asia, and the constant attacks I made on English statesmen who were so easily rocked to sleep in false security.

There is a peculiar charm in the literary success attained after many years of persistent work—a success which hostile criticism in vain tries to minimize; for, in spite of an occasional disproportion between the battle and the result, the pen

leaves traces behind which often, after many years, come back to us as the echo of long-forgotten exploits. As I have just spoken of my political activity, I will here mention, by way of curiosity, that Prince Reuss, late ambassador of the German Empire on the Neva, drawing my attention to the effect produced by my leading article published in the *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung*, said to me at the house of the German Consul-General Boyanowsky at Budapest: "You do not seem to know how much importance the Asiatic Department in St. Petersburg attaches to your enunciations in regard to Central Asiatic politics. Your articles served the Russians at the time not only as guides, but also as encouragement, and you have rendered but a problematic service to England by their publication." Personal experience on the scene of action, a constant, keen interest in the development of events in the inner Asiatic world, and the stimulus of ambition may have helped to give me a bolder and more far-reaching view than this body of statesmen possessed, but that my writings should carry so much weight I never thought. Comical episodes are not wanting either; they are sure to occur in any public career pursued for many years together. When the despatch of the German Emperor to Krüger, at the time of the Jameson Raid in the Transvaal, caused such tremendous excitement in London, and everybody was talking about the increasing Anglophobia in Germany, I discussed this question, of course

from the point of view favourable to England, in a letter dated the 12th of January, 1896. The *Times* saw fit to publish my letter, which took up a whole column of its front page, and on a Saturday, too, so that the letter might lie over all the longer. Of course this article, signed "A Foreigner," attracted much attention in the German Press. Just at that time Leopold II., King of the Belgians, happened to be in London, and the German papers hit on the curious idea of connecting his Belgian Majesty with the "foreigner." Of course all were up in arms against the "Coburger," and the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of January 21, 1896, delivered quite a peppered sermon against him. It could not leave me quite indifferent to see a crowned head taken to task for my utterances, and I communicated the real state of affairs to the Belgian Ambassador in Vienna, but this *quid pro quo* has never been made public, for the *Times* never betrays its co-operators. One would scarcely believe how much the influence of the Press is felt, even in the remotest corners of the earth. In consequence of the expression of my views about the Islamic nations, either in Turkish or Persian, I received letters not only from all parts of the Ottoman Empire, but also from the Crimea, Siberia, Arabia, and North Africa, and hardly ever did a Moslem, or Dervish, or merchant pass Budapest without coming to see me to assure me of the sympathy of his fellow-countrymen.

The Mohammedans of India[1] were particularly friendly, on account of my relations with the Sultan, and invited me to give lectures in some of their towns, an invitation which tempted me very much, as I was rather curious to see the effect of a Persian speech delivered by a European among these genuine Asiatics. An open letter to the Mohammedans of India did much to strengthen these friendly feelings, and if it had not been for the sixty years which weighed on my shoulders I should long ere now have made a trip to Hindustan.

[1] See Appendix III.

At the English Court

CHAPTER X

AT THE ENGLISH COURT

In proportion as my works found consideration in the most obscure parts of the Old and of the New World, their effect in Europe was felt even in the highest Government circles, and it is not surprising that the travelling staff and the pen brought the obscure author into contact with sovereigns and princes. In England, where, in spite of the strict rules of Court etiquette, the genealogical relations of the self-made man are not considered of such great importance, my ardent defence of British interests could not be overlooked.

After the appearance of my book, *The Coming Struggle for India*, I was invited by Queen Victoria, whom I had already met on the occasion of my stay at Sandringham with the Prince of Wales, to visit her at Windsor, and the reception this rare sovereign accorded me was as great a surprise to the world in general as it was to me.

It was in the year 1889, on the occasion of my

stay in London, that I received a card bearing the following invitation :—

THE LORD STEWARD

has received her Majesty's command to invite

PROFESSOR VAMBÉRY

to dinner at Windsor Castle on Monday, the 6th May, and to remain until the following day.

WINDSOR CASTLE, 5*th May*, 1889.

I had already been informed of the intended invitation by telegram, and as, for political reasons, it was not thought wise to invite and do honour to the anti-Russian author without further reason—it would have seemed like a direct challenge to the Court at St. Petersburg—the telegram bore the further message: "To see the library and the sights of the Castle." When I read these words I reflected that if the Czar, Alexander III., could receive and mark out for distinction the pro-Russian author, Stead, without further ado, this excuse was almost superfluous, and Queen Victoria could very well receive the representative of the opposite party. However, I paid no further heed to these needless precautions, but went down to Windsor. A royal carriage awaited me at the station, and I drove to the Castle, where I was received by the Lord Steward, Sir Henry Ponsonby, an amiable and noble-minded man, who greeted me

warmly and conducted me to the apartment prepared for me. I had hardly got rid of the dust of the journey when Sir Henry Ponsonby re-entered the room and, according to the custom at Court, brought me the royal birthday book, requesting me to enter my name, with the day and year of my birth.

It was a noble company in whose ranks my name was to figure, for the book was full of signatures of crowned heads, princes, great artists, learned men, and noted soldiers of the day. As I prepared to comply with the request the uncertainty of the date of my birth suddenly occurred to me, and as I gazed hesitatingly before me Sir Henry asked me with a pleasant smile the reason of my embarrassment.

"Sir," I said, "I do not know the exact date of my birth, and I should not like to enter a lie in the royal book."

When I had told him the circumstances written on the first page of these Memoirs he took me by the hand, remarking pleasantly, "You need not be ashamed of that. Her Majesty lays less weight upon the birth of her guests than upon their actions and merits."

So I entered the conventional date of the 19th of March, 1832, and am quite sure that among the many guests at Windsor there was never another to whom the day and year of his entry into this world were unknown.

With the exception of this rather unpleasant, but otherwise comical, episode my stay at Windsor was a most pleasant one. The Court officials, whose acquaintance I made at lunch, vied with each other in their amiability to the foreign defender of British interests in Asia, and this was especially the case among the military officers, who soon struck up a political conversation with me. An Englishman, be he courtier, soldier, or an ordinary mortal, speaks unreservedly of his political opinions without any consideration for the party in office, and I was much surprised to hear one of the higher Court officials, an ardent admirer of Mr. Gladstone, speak in very sharp terms of the politics of the Conservative, Lord Salisbury, even drawing me into the criticism.

My apartments were in one of the round towers of the Castle, so full of historical memories, and as I gazed at the lovely landscape, with the Thames winding in and out among the trees, and remembered the ideas I had formed of this royal castle when I read Shakespeare, I was deeply moved at the wonderful change in my position. If some one had told me in the days gone by that I, who was then living in the poorest circumstances, and even suffering hunger, should one day be the honoured guest of the Queen of England and Empress of India at Windsor, that men in high position would lead me through the ancient halls, show me the royal treasures, and that I should sit next but two to the

Queen at table, I should, in spite of my lively imagination, have thought him a fool and have laughed in his face. The crown jewels never dazzled me to such an extent as to force me to worship their wearer. But every one must agree that the natural simplicity of Queen Victoria's manner, her rare amiability and kindness of heart, and the way in which she knew how to honour Art and Science, had a most fascinating effect on those who came into contact with her. It is a great mistake to imagine that this princess, placed at the head of the monarchical republic, as England may be called on account of its constitution, was only the symbolical leader of the mighty State, having no influence on its wonderful machinery. Queen Victoria had a remarkable memory; she knew the ins and outs of every question, took a lively interest in everything, and in spite of her earnest mien and conversation, sparks of wit often lighted up the seemingly cold surface and reminded one of the fact that she was a talented princess and a clever, sensible woman.

Queen Victoria has often erroneously been depicted as a woman cold in manner, reserved, and of a gloomy nature, who, with her carefully worded questions and answers made a rather unfavourable impression on her visitor. This idea is quite incorrect. She certainly was a little reserved at first, but as soon as her clever brain had formed an opinion as to the character and disposition of the

stranger, her seeming coldness was cast aside, and was replaced by a charming graciousness of manner, and she warmed to her subject as her interest in it grew.

When, at Sandringham, I had the honour of walking in the park next to her little carriage drawn by two donkeys, she seemed at first to be paying scant attention to my conversation with the gentleman-in-waiting who accompanied us, but when I began to speak about my adventures and experiences in Central Asia, her interest visibly increased, and she made inquiries as to the smallest details. What most surprised me was that she not only retained all the strange Oriental names, but pronounced them quite correctly, a rare thing in a European, especially in a lady; she even remembered the features and peculiarities of the various Asiatics who had visited her Court, and the opinions she formed were always correct.

One evening, I think it was at Sandringham, she conversed with me for a long time about the East, chiefly about Turkey. She remembered all the Turkish ambassadors of half a century, and after having spoken for some time about Fuad Pasha, I took courage, and asked her if the following anecdote which I had often heard in the East were true:—

"They say," I began, "that during one of his missions to the English Court, Fuad Pasha brought your Majesty a beautiful brooch as a present from

the Sultan, Abdul Medjid, and that some years afterwards your Majesty had a pair of earrings made of it. When on another mission Fuad Pasha saw and admired the earrings, your Majesty is said to have remarked: 'N'est ce pas, sa Majesté le Sultan sera bien faché d'entendre, que j'ai gâté la broche dont il m'a fait cadeau?' Fuad Pasha is said to have given the following witty answer: 'Au contraire, Madame, mon souverain sera enchanté d'entendre que votre Majesté prête l'oreille à tout ce qui vient de sa part.'"

The Queen listened silently, then remarked—

"It is a pretty story, but it is not true."

I found that this princess had more sense of the importance of strengthening British power in Asia, than many of her noted ministers; and the Shah of Persia, on the occasion of his visit to Budapest, told me astonishing stories of the Queen's familiarity with Oriental affairs. I was not a little surprised when she, at the age of seventy, told me of her studies in Hindustani, and showed me her written exercises in that tongue. The two Indian servants, with their enormous turbans and wide garments, who waited on the Queen at table and accompanied her on her excursions, were a living proof of the interest the Empress of India took in the establishment of British power in Asia; and when I saw with what devotion and respect these long-bearded Asiatics waited on a woman, and what is more, a *Christian* woman, handing her food and drink, and

watching for the least sign from her, I could hardly refrain from expressing my admiration. The knowledge that the most powerful sovereign in the world, who guides the destinies of nearly four hundred million human beings, stands before you in the form of a modest, unassuming woman is overwhelming. And when I saw in the Royal Library at Windsor the numerous addresses and Presentations, and assurances of devotion from the Emir of Afghanistan and other Asiatic potentates, written on scrolls of parchment in large golden letters, or when I admired the crowns, sceptres, and Oriental arms, preserved in the Royal Treasury at Windsor, I could never tire in my admiration of the power and greatness of Britain.

Discretion forbids me to say more of Queen Victoria, and I will only add that the graciousness with which she received me, and the words in which she acknowledged my literary efforts on England's behalf, will always be more precious to me than all the orders and treasures with which sovereigns think to have repaid the author.

After the Queen's death in 1901 her successor, Edward VII., showed me many marks of favour. I had made his acquaintance (as I remarked on p. 248) in 1865, and during all the time he was Prince of Wales he never missed an opportunity of showing his appreciation of my literary efforts. Of all the monarchs of Europe and Asia not one has visited and studied other countries and nationalities of the

Old and of the New World as he has done; consequently he is very capable of leading the politics of the giant kingdom he rules over. When, in the course of conversation with him, I touched upon the situation in Turkey, Persia or India, I found him quite familiar with all these subjects, and his opinion was never influenced by differences in race or in religion. Having noticed during his visit to Budapest that the Hungarian aristocracy did not pay the same honour to the man of letters as was done in London, he gave an evening party, and appeared in the drawing-room arm in arm with the present writer, whom he introduced to the assembled guests as "My friend, Professor Vambéry!"

King Edward is at once a clever writer and a good orator, as is proved by the book entitled, *Speeches and Addresses of H.R.H. The Prince of Wales*, 1863–1888, London, 1889. When I visited him in 1901, shortly after his accession to the throne, I found, greatly to my satisfaction, that the possession of a crown had caused no change in his character. He was as amiable as before, and begged me to visit him as often as I came to England. He also proved his nobleness of mind on the occasion of my seventieth birthday, when I received the following telegram from the King's private secretary, Lord Francis Knollys: "The King commands me to send you his warmest congratulations on the seventieth anniversary of your birthday."

A few days later I received the following communication :—

"MARLBOROUGH HOUSE,
"PALL MALL, S.W.,
"*March* 18, 1902.

"Dear PROFESSOR VAMBÉRY,—I am commanded by the King to inform you, that he has much pleasure in conferring upon you the third class (Commander) of the Victorian Order on your 70th birthday, as a mark of his appreciation of your having always proved so good and constant a friend to England, and as a token of His Majesty's personal regard towards you.

"I beg to remain, dear Professor Vambéry,
"Yours very faithfully,
"FRANCIS KNOLLYS."

This proof of royal favour naturally caused a sensation abroad, and also at home, where Government had taken but scant notice of my festival, and it was generally highly appreciated. As to why Hungary on this occasion again tried to prove the truth of the adage that no man is a prophet in his own country I have spoken in another part of this book.

All I wish to prove now is that King Edward VII. has always shown a lively appreciation of literary efforts and aspirations, and in spite of his exalted position does not allow himself to be influenced by difference in rank or religion.

Directly after his accession he requested the representatives of foreign powers in London to introduce to him all the foreign artists and authors who might come to London, as he wished to make their acquaintance. Thus he proves himself to be a true son of liberal Albion, and filled with the democratic spirit of our century.

As though to prove the truth of the proverb, "The fruit never falls far from the tree," the present Prince of Wales distinguishes himself in the same way, and by his amiability he has already won all hearts. At the time of my visit to Sandringham I lived in the apartments of the late Duke of Clarence, who was absent at the time, and thus I became the neighbour of Prince George, as he was then called. One afternoon, while I was occupied with my correspondence, I received an invitation from the Queen to join her in the garden; as I wished to wash my hands before going down I rang several times for warm water, but no one came. At length the young Prince came to my door, and asked me what I wanted. I told him, and he disappeared, returning in a few minutes with a large jug in his hand, which he placed, smiling, on my washstand.

Not at all bad, I thought, for the poor Jewish beggar-student of former years to be waited upon by a Prince! I have often laughed at the recollection of this incident, and have since dubbed the future sovereign of Great Britain, "The Royal Jug-bearer."

The King's other children also resemble him in this respect, and I often think of the following episode. One evening, at Sandringham, a gala-dinner was given in honour of Queen Victoria, and I was to take Princess Louise in to dinner; the Prince of Wales, now Edward VII., took a glance at the assembled guests, then approached me, saying: "Vambéry, why did you not put on orders?"

I was just going to make some excuse when the Princess (the present Duchess of Fife) remarked: "Why, Papa, Professor Vambéry ought to have pinned some of his books on to his coat; they would be the most suitable decorations."

It was a thoroughly democratic spirit which reigned in the home of the present King when he was Prince of Wales—a spirit which he has introduced into Buckingham Palace to the no small anger of many narrow-minded aristocrats. King Edward VII. understands the spirit of his times better than many of his brother sovereigns, and his popularity in England and America is a very natural result.

My Intercourse with Sultan Abdul Hamid

CHAPTER XI

MY INTERCOURSE WITH SULTAN ABDUL HAMID

SPEAKING of royal appreciation, I cannot leave unmentioned the reception I had from the Sultan of Turkey, a curious contrast indeed to my former life in Constantinople.

My personal acquaintance with Sultan Abdul Hamid dates from the time that I lived in the house of Rifaat Pasha, who was related to Reshid Pasha. The son of the latter, Ghalib Pasha, who had married a daughter of Abdul Medjid, wanted his wife to take French lessons, and I was selected to teach her because it was understood that, being familiar with Turkish customs, I should not infringe upon the strict rules of the harem. Three times a week I had to present myself at the Pasha's palace, situated on the Bay of Bebek, and each time I was conducted by a eunuch into the Mabein, *i.e.*, a room between the harem and the selamlik, where I sat down before a curtain behind which my pupil the princess had placed herself. I never set eyes upon the princess. The method

of instruction I had chosen was the so-called Ahn-system, consisting of learning by heart small sentences, gradually introducing various words and forms. I called through the curtain, "Père—baba; mère—ana; le père est bon—baba eji dir; la mère est bonne—ana eji dir," etc., and the princess on the other side repeated after me, and always took trouble to imitate my pronunciation most carefully. Fatma Sultan, as the princess was called, had a soft, melodious voice, from which I concluded that she had a sweet character, and she was also considerate and kind-hearted, for after the lesson had been going on for some time she told the eunuch by my side, or more correctly, stationed in the room to keep watch over me, to bring me some refreshments, and afterwards she inquired after my condition and private circumstances. It was during these lessons in the Mabein that amongst the visitors who entered from time to time I was particularly struck by a slender, pale-looking boy; he often sat down beside me, fixed his eyes upon me, and seemed interested in my discourse. I asked what his name was, and learned that it was Prince Hamid Effendi, a brother of my pupil, and that he distinguished himself among his brothers and sisters by a particularly lively spirit. In course of time this little episode, like many others, faded from my memory.

After my return from Central Asia, when I

found other spheres of work, I kept aloof from Turkey, and I only remained in touch with the Ottoman people in so far as my philological and ethnographical studies had reference to the linguistic and ethnical part of this most Westerly branch of the great Turkish family. In my political writings, chiefly taken up with the affairs of inner Asia, the unfortunate fate of the Porte has always continued to touch me very deeply. The land of my youthful dreams, to which I am for ever indebted for its noble hospitality, and where I have felt as much at home as in my own country, could never be indifferent to me. Its troubles and misfortunes were mine, and whenever opportunity offered I have broken a lance for Turkey; without keeping up personal relations with the Porte, I have always considered it a sacred duty with my pen to stand up for the interests of this often unjustly calumniated nation. My Turkophile sympathies could, of course, not remain unknown on the banks of the Bosphorus, and when, after the opening of railway communication with Turkey, I went to Stambul, I received from the Turks and their ruler a quiet, unostentatious, but all the warmer and heartier reception. Our mutual relationship only gradually manifested itself. On my first journey I remained almost unnoticed, for after a space of thirty years only a few of my old acquaintances were left, and the *ci-devant* Reshid Effendi, under which name I was known at the Porte, was only remembered by

a few. My second visit was already more of a success, and my reappearance in public revived the old memory, for my fluency of speech had lent "the foreigner" a new attraction in Turkish society. Wherever I appeared in public I was looked at somewhat doubtfully, for many who had not known me before imagined from my real Turkish Effendi conversation that I was a Turkish renegade. Thanks to my old connections, the problem was soon solved. The Turkish newspapers gave long columns about my humble person, and extolled the services which, in spite of many years' absence, I had rendered to the country.

Sultan Abdul Hamid, a watchful and enlightened ruler, full of national pride, although perhaps a little too anxious and severely absolute, was certainly not the one to lag behind his people in acknowledging merit; and as an unpleasant incident prevented him from showing me his sympathies on my first visit, I was invited a few months later to pay another visit to the Turkish capital as his special guest. To make up for former neglect I received an almost regal reception. The slope up to Pera which in 1857 I had climbed a destitute young adventurer, I now drove up in a royal equipage accompanied by the court officials who had received me at the station; and when I had been installed in the apartments prepared for me by the Sultan's command, and was soon after welcomed by the Grandmaster of Ceremonies on

behalf of the sovereign, that old fairy-tale-feeling came over me again. My first quarters at Püspöki's, swarming with rats; my *rôle* of house-dog in the isolated dwelling of Major A., my *début* as singer and reciter in the coffee-houses, and many other reminiscences from the struggling beginning of my career in the East, flitted before my eyes in a cloudy vision of the past.

On the morning after my arrival I could have stood for hours gazing out of the window on the Bosphorus, recalling a hundred different episodes enacted on this spot, but I was wakened out of these sweet dreams by an adjutant of the Sultan who called to conduct me to an audience at the Yildiz Palace. As I passed through the great entrance hall of the Chit-Kiosk, where the Sultan was wont to receive in the morning, marshals, generals, and high court officials rose from their seats to greet me, and on many faces I detected an expression of astonishment, why, how, and for what their imperial master was doing so much honour to this insignificant, limping European, who was not even an ambassador. When I appeared before the Sultan he came a few steps towards me, shook hands, and made me sit down in an easy chair by his side. At the first words I uttered—of course I made my speech as elegant as I could—surprise was depicted on the face of the Ruler of all True Believers, and when I told him that I remembered him as a twelve-year-old boy in the palace of his

sister, Fatma Sultan, the wife of Ali Ghalib Pasha, attending the French lesson which I was giving the princess, the ice was broken at once, and the otherwise timid and suspicious monarch treated me as an old acquaintance. At a sign the chamberlain on duty left the hall, and I remained quite alone with Sultan Abdul Hamid—a distinction thus far not vouchsafed to many Europeans, and not likely to be, as the Sultan is not acquainted with European languages, and therefore, according to the rules of court etiquette, cannot hold a face-to-face interview with foreigners. The conversation turned for the greater part upon persons and events of thirty years past, upon his father, Sultan Abdul Medjid, to whom I had once been presented, Reshid Pasha, Lord Stratford Canning, whom the Sultan remembered distinctly, and many other persons, questions, and details of that time. As the conversation progressed the splendour and the nimbus of majesty disappeared before my eyes. I saw merely a Turkish Pasha or Effendi such as I had known many in high Stambul society, only with this difference, that Sultan Abdul Hamid, by his many endowments, a wonderful memory, and a remarkable knowledge of European affairs, far surpasses many of his highly gifted subjects. Of course I became gradually freer in my conversation, and when the Sultan offered me a cigarette and with his own hand struck a match for me to light it, I was quite overcome by the affability of the

absolute Ruler, Padishah, and Representative of Mohammed on earth, or "Shadow of God," as he is also called.

The first audience lasted over half an hour, and when, after being escorted to the door by the Sultan, I again passed through the entrance hall crowded with high dignitaries, the surprise of these men was even greater than before, and for days together the topic of conversation in the circles of the Porte at Stambul, and in the diplomatic circles of Pera, was the extraordinary familiarity existing between the generally timid and reserved Sultan and my humble self. As this intimacy has also been commented upon and explained in various ways in Europe, I will shortly state what was the real motive of the Sultan's attentions to me, and why I have been so anxious to retain his favour.

First of all I must point out that I was the first European known to the Sultan who was equally at home in the East as in the West, familiar with the languages, customs, and political affairs of both parts of the world, and who, in his presence, was not stiff like the Europeans, but pliant, like the Asiatics of the purest water. I always appeared before him with my fez on; I greeted him as an Oriental greets his sovereign; I used the usual bombastic forms of speech in addressing him; I sat, stood, went about, as it becomes an Oriental—in a word, I submitted to all the conventionalities which the Westerner never observes in the presence

of the Sultan. Moreover, he was impressed by all my experiences, and in his desire for knowledge he was pleased to be instructed on many points. All these things put together were in themselves enough to attract his attention towards me. The second reason for the friendship and amiability shown me by Sultan Abdul Hamid was my Hungarian nationality, and the Turcophile character of my public activity, of which, however, he did not hear more fully till later. The friendly feelings exhibited by Hungary during the late Russo-Turkish war had touched the Sultan deeply, and his sympathies for the Christian sister-nation of the Magyars were undoubtedly warm and true. Now as to the possible merits of my writings, the Sultan, like the Turks in general, was well aware of my Turcophile journalistic activity, but none of them had the slightest conception of my philological and ethnological studies in connection with Turkey. They had never even heard of them, and when I handed the Sultan a copy of my monograph on the Uiguric linguistic monuments, he said, somewhat perplexed, "We have never heard of the existence of such ancient Turkish philological monuments, and it is really very interesting that our ancestors even before the adoption of Islam were many of them able to write, as would appear from these curious characters." With regard to the skill and tact of Sultan Abdul Hamid I will just mention in connection with the subject of the

old Turkish language, that he, recognising at once my keen interest in everything of an old Turkish nature, drew my attention to some pictures in his reception-room, the one of Söyjüt in Asia Minor (the cradle of the Ottoman dynasty), and the other of the Mausoleum of Osman; and he told me with some pride that these pictures were the work of a Turkish artist. He also told me that in the Imperial household, which lives in strict seclusion from the other Osmanli, a considerable number of Turkish words and expressions are used quite unknown to the other Osmanli more accessible to outside influences. The Sultan quoted some specimens, and, as I recognised in them Azerbaidjan, *i.e.*, Turkoman linguistic remains, the Sultan smiled, quite pleased, thinking that with these monuments he could prove the unadulterated Turkish national character of the Osmanli dynasty. This vanity surprised me greatly, as a while ago the Turks were rather ashamed of their Turkish antecedents, and now their monarch actually boasted of them!

The third, and perhaps the most valid, reason for the Sultan's attentions to me lay in the international character of my pen, and more especially in the notice which England had taken of my writings. Sultan Abdul Hamid, a skilful diplomatist and discerner of men, one of the most cunning Orientals I have ever known, attached great importance to the manner in which he was thought and talked of in Europe. Public opinion in the West, scorned

by our would-be important highest circles of society —although they cannot hide their chagrin in case of unfavourable criticism—has always seemed of very great moment to the Sultan; and in his endeavours to incline public opinion in his favour this clever Oriental has given the best proof that he has a keener insight into the political and social conditions than many of his Christian fellow-sovereigns. Fully conscious that his ultimate fate depends on Europe, he has always endeavoured to make himself beloved, not at one single court, but by the various people of Europe, and is anxious to avoid all cause of blame and severe criticism. England's opinion he seemed to think a great deal of; for although he simulated indifference and even assumed an air of hostility, in his innermost mind he was firmly convinced that England from motives of self-interest would be compelled to uphold the Ottoman State, and at the critical moment would come to the rescue and lend a helping hand. To hide this last anchor of hope he has often coquetted with France, even with Russia, in order to annoy the English and to make them jealous; but how very different his real inmost feelings and expectations were I have often gathered from his conversations. Sultan Abdul Hamid has always been of a peculiarly nervous, excitable nature; against his will he often flew into a passion, trembled in every limb, and his voice refused speech. On one occasion he told me how he had

been brought up with the warmest sympathies for England, how his father had spoken of England as Turkey's best friend, and how now in his reign, through the politics of Gladstone and the occupation of Egypt, he had had to undergo the most painful experiences. Then every appearance of dissimulation vanished, and I could look right down into the heart of this extraordinary man.

It was during a conversation about the advisability of an English alliance in the interests of the Ottoman State, that the Sultan in the fire of his conversation told me the following: "I was six or seven years old when my blessed father commanded my presence, as he was going to send me to one of my aunts. I found him in one of his apartments, sitting on a sofa in intimate conversation with an elderly Christian gentleman. When my father noticed me, he called to me to come nearer and kiss the hand of the stranger seated by his side. At this behest I burst out in tears, for the idea of kissing the hand of a Giaour was to me in my inexperience absolutely revolting. My father, generally so sweet-tempered, became angry and said: 'Do you know who this gentleman is? It is the English Ambassador, the best friend of my house and my country, and the English, although not belonging to our faith, are our most faithful allies.' Upon this I reverently kissed the old gentleman's hand. It was the Böyük Eltchi, Lord Stratford Canning. My father's words were deeply engraved upon my mind, and so I

grew up with the idea that the English are our best friends. How bitterly I was disillusioned when I came to the throne! England left me in the lurch, for the demonstration of the fleet in the Sea of Marmora, as was said in Constantinople, was instigated more by the interests of England than of Turkey, which is not right. Her ambassadors—*i.e.*, Elliot and Layard—have betrayed me, and when I was in want of money and asked for a small loan of £150,000, I received a negative reply. So that is what you in the West call friendship, and thus the beautiful dreams of my youth have come to naught," cried the Sultan with a deep sigh. My explanation that in England, without the consent of Parliament, no large sums of money can be lent or given away did not in the least enlighten the Sultan. Oriental sovereigns do not believe it even now, for to them constitution and Parliament are mere names, invented to mislead the public. To born Asiatics, moreover, the liberal methods of Governments of the West are altogether unreasonable, and Feth Ali Shah said to the English Ambassador, Malcolm, these well-known words: "And you call your sovereign a mighty ruler, who allows himself to be dictated to by six hundred of his subjects (the members of Parliament), whose orders he is bound to follow? A crown like that I would refuse," said this king of all Iran kings; and my friend Max Nordau is much of the same opinion, for in his *Conventional Lies* he suggests

that all genuine constitutional sovereigns of Europe should be sent to the lunatic asylum, because they imagine themselves to be rulers and are ruled over by others.

Like Feth Ali Shah, and even more than he, Sultan Abdul Hamid hated all liberal forms of government. He never made a secret of this opinion, and during the many years of our acquaintance the Sultan repeatedly expressed his views on this matter frankly and without palliation. In one way, as already mentioned, it was my thorough Turkishness in language and behaviour—he always addressed me as Reshid Effendi and also treated me as such—which led him to make these confidences and to overcome his innate timidity and suspicion. Then, again, my relations with the successor to the English throne carried weight with him, and the invitation I had received from Queen Victoria induced him to see in me something more than an ordinary scholar and traveller; in fact, he looked upon me as a confidant of the English court and Government—two ideas which to him were inseparable—to whom he might freely and safely open his heart.

"I am always surrounded by hypocrites and parasites," he said to me one day; "I am weary of these everlasting laudations and this endless sneaking. They all want to take advantage of me, all seek to gratify their private interests; and all that come to my ears are base lies and mean

dissimulations. Believe me, the truth, be it ever so bitter, would please me better than all these empty compliments to which they feel bound to treat me. I want you to speak frankly and openly to me; you are my superior in years and experience; you are at home both in the East and in the West, and there is much I can learn from you." This candid speech, of a sort not very usual with Oriental potentates, naturally encouraged me still more, and during the hours spent in confidential *tête-à-tête* with Sultan Abdul Hamid I could touch upon the tenderest and most delicate points of the home and foreign politics of his court and the characteristics of his dignitaries. The Sultan always surprised me with his sound remarks. He bitterly complained of the untrustworthiness of his first ministers, called them not very complimentary names, and from the confidences of this apparently mighty autocrat I caught a faint glimmer of his impotence and utter loneliness. Once when I called his attention to the ignoble conduct of his chief courtiers, he appeared to be specially excited, and cried, "Do you think I do not know every one of them, and am not aware of it all? Alas! I know but too well. But whence can I procure other and better people in a society which for centuries has wallowed in this pool of slander? Only time and culture can do salutary work here; nothing else can do it." And, indeed, contrary to all previously conceived notions, the Sultan had admitted into his immediate surroundings such young

people as had distinguished themselves in the schools, and were in no way connected with the leading families. His object was to create a circle of his own round him, and like these confidants at home, he wanted me, abroad, to show him my friendship by sending him at least twice a month a report written in Turkish about public opinion in Europe; about the position of the political questions of the day; about the condition of Islam outside Turkey, and to answer the questions he would put to me.

I readily promised my services, but soon realised that with all his apparent frankness, these confessions of a monarch brought up in strictly Oriental principles were not to be taken in real earnest, for when one day, in the heat of conversation, I made some slightly critical remarks, and ventured to question the expediency or the advisability of certain measures and plans of his Majesty, I noticed at once signs of displeasure and surprise on his countenance, and from that time little clouds have darkened the horizon of our mutual intercourse. And how could it be otherwise? Potentates, and above all Orientals, are far too much accustomed to incense; the coarse food of naked truth cannot be to their taste; and when an absolute ruler is superior to his surroundings, not only in actual power but also in intellectual endowments, an adverse opinion, no matter how thickly sugared the pill may be, is not easily swallowed. From the very

beginning of his reign Sultan Abdul Hamid has never tolerated any contradiction; apparently he listened patiently to any proffered advice, but without allowing himself to be shaken in his preconceived opinion; and when some Grand-Vizier or other distinguished himself by steadfastness to his own individual views, as was the case, for instance, with Khaired-din Pasha, Kiamil Pasha, Ahmed Vefik Pasha, and others, they soon have had to retire. True, through his extraordinary acuteness the Sultan has mitigated many mistakes resulting from his defective education. In conversation he hardly ever betrayed his absolute lack of schooling, although he was not even well versed in his own mother-tongue. He said to me frequently, "Please talk ordinary Turkish!" His excellent memory enabled him to turn to good account a thing years after he had heard it, and his flowery language deceived many of his European visitors. But, taking him altogether, he was a great ignoramus and sadly needed to be taught, though in his sovereign dignity and exalted position of "God's Shadow on Earth," he had to fancy himself omniscient. Thoroughly convinced of this, I have, in my subsequent intercourse with the Sultan, exercised a certain amount of reserve; I learned to be ever more careful in my expressions, and when the Sultan noticed this I replied in the words of the Persian poem—

"The nearness of princes is as a burning fire,"

which he took with a gratified smile. In a word, I was a dumb counsellor, and I much regret that the European diplomats on the Bosphorus did not look upon my position in this light, but laid all sorts of political intrigues to my charge; and that my relations to the Sultan, who had me for hours together in his room—and when I was there kept even his most intimate chamberlain at a distance—necessarily gave rise to a good deal of speculation. The long faces, the frowns, the despairing looks which the court officials in the Sultan's immediate vicinity showed me, and the way they measured me when after a long audience I crossed the hall or the park, often startled me and made me feel uncomfortable. These simple folks took me for the devil or some magic spectre personified who had ensnared their sovereign, and was leading him, God only knows whither. There were but few who had a good word for me, and many were quite convinced that at every visit I carried away with me into the land of unbelievers quantities of treasures and gold. When later on through my intercourse with the Moslem scholars and Mollas at court I had made a name as a practical scholar of Islam, and became conspicuous on account of my Persian and Tartar conversational powers, they were still more astonished, and the head-shaking over my enigmatic personality became even more significant. They took me for a deposed Indian prince, a Turkestan scholar exiled by the Russians, but most often for a dangerous

person whom it had been better for the Sultan never to have known. To the European circles of Pera I was likewise a riddle. Sometimes alone, sometimes in company with Hungarian academicians, I used to search in the Imperial treasure-house for remains of the library of King Mathias Corvinus, captured by the Turks in Ofen and brought over to Constantinople. I discovered many things, but I was branded as a political secret agent of England. A well-known diplomatist said, "Ce savant est un homme dangereux, il faut se défaire de lui." But the good man was mistaken. I was neither *dangereux* nor secret agent of any State; for, in the first place, my self-esteem revolted against the assigned *rôle* of dealer in diplomatic secrets; and, moreover, what Cabinet would think of employing a secret agent outside their Legation, maintained at such great expense? I do not for a moment wish to hide the fact that in my conversations with the Sultan about political questions I always took the side of Austro-Hungary and England; that I was always up in arms against Russia, and launched out against the perfidy, the barbarism, and the insatiable greed for land of the Northern power. More anti-Russian than all Turks and the Sultan himself, I could not well be, and the more I could blacken Russia politically the better service did I fancy I rendered to our European culture. To obviate any suspicion, the Sultan once wanted to invite me to a court dinner together

with the Russian Ambassador Nelidoff; however, I begged to be excused. Of the various ambassadors I have only attended a public court dinner with the Persian Ambassador (Prince Maurocordato), the plenipotentiary of Greece, and with Baron Marshal von Bieberstein, and these diplomatists were not a little surprised to notice the attention with which the Sultan treated me.

For several years I thus enjoyed the Sultan's favour and occupied this exceptional position at his court. As long as the Grand Seigneur saw in me a staunch Turcophile and defender of Islam, who, led by fanaticism, palliated all the mistakes and wrong-doings with which Europe charged all Oriental systems of government; as long as I regarded Turkey as an unwarrantably abused State, and European intervention as unjustifiable at all times, he gave me his undivided confidence and astonished me by his unfeigned candour.

Many years of experience in Turkish society had taught me that the Sultan is regarded as an almost Divine being, and consequently this extraordinary affability was all the more surprising. He treated me, so to speak, as a confidential friend, talked with me about State concerns, and the interests of his dynasty, as if I had been an Osmanli and co-regent of the empire. He conferred with me about the most delicate political questions, with a candour, which he never displayed even before his Grand-Vizier and his Ministers; and consequently my

letters to him from Budapest were free and unrestrained, and such as this sovereign had probably never received before.

Now, if there had only been questions of purely Turkish interests, internal reforms and improvements, there would have been no occasion to shake the Sultan's confidence in me, but Sultan Abdul Hamid's mind was always busy with foreign politics, and because in regard to these I could not always unconditionally agree with him, this was bound to lead in process of time, if not to an absolute rupture, at any rate to a cooling of our former warm friendship. For some time the Egyptian Question was the chief point of discussion. The Sultan often complained to me about the unlucky star which ruled over his foreign politics; that he had lost so many of the inherited provinces, that the loss of the Nile-land, that precious jewel of his crown, was particularly grievous to him, and that the faithlessness of the English troubled him above all things. As a matter of course he vented his wrath especially upon the English Government; and although he was not particularly enamoured of any of the European Cabinets, nay, I might say, hated and feared them all alike, it was the St. James's Cabinet which, whether Liberal or Conservative, had always to bear the brunt of his ire. He was on very bad terms with the two English Ambassadors who shortly before and shortly after his accession to the throne represented the Cabinet of St. James's

in Constantinople. Once, Lady Layard sent me for presentation to the Sultan, a picture of herself in a very valuable frame, and when I delivered it on the occasion of an evening audience the Grand Seigneur, generally so completely master of himself, became quite excited, and pointing to the portrait he said to me, "For this lady, whom you see there, I have the greatest respect; for during the war she has tended my wounded soldiers with great self-sacrifice, and I shall always feel grateful to her; but as for her husband," he continued, "I have torn him out of my heart, for he has shamefully abused my confidence." Thereupon he tore at his breast as if he would pull something out, and slinging his empty hand to the ground, he tramped excitedly on the floor, as if he were demolishing the heart of the absent delinquent. This act of passionate emotion I have noticed more particularly among Turkish women, and there are many traits in the Sultan's character which speak of the harem life. I tried to pacify the angry monarch by reminding him that Layard, as ambassador, had but done his duty in delivering the message, and that those gentlemen alone were to blame who had allowed such confidential communications to become public property. I quoted, moreover, the Koran passage which says, "La zewal fi'l sefirun" ("The envoy is not to be blamed"); but it was all in vain, the name of this deserving English diplomat had quite upset the Sultan; he was unwilling and unable to distinguish

between the actions of the statesman and of the private gentleman.

One cannot altogether blame the Sultan either, when we think of the bitter experiences he so often has had to undergo; but in politics, justice and fairness have quite a different meaning from what they have in ordinary life, and Sultan Abdul Hamid most decidedly acted imprudently when, without taking into consideration England's most vital interests, he demanded of this State a policy which, on account of the altered general aspect of affairs, and on account of the growing insular antipathy against Turkey, had become impossible. That the Conservatives, in spite of all Mr. Gladstone's Atrocity-meetings, dared to appear with a fleet in the Sea of Marmora, to prevent Russia from taking Constantinople, has never been appreciated by the Sultan. He had always before his eyes the comedy of Dulcigno and Smyrna, instigated by the Liberal Government of England, and the occupation of Egypt appeared to him more perfidious than the challenge of Russia, and all the injury he had sustained from the Western Power.

In course of time the relations between the Porte and the Cabinet of St. James were bound to become cooler. *Inter duos litigantes*, Russia was the *tertius gaudens;* and when in addition to the previous coldness the Armenian difficulties arose, the two great European Powers completely changed places in Asia, for the Russian arch-enemy became

the bosom friend and confidant of the Turkish court (not of the Turkish nation), and England was looked upon as the *diabolus rotæ* of the Ottoman Empire. With regard to the Armenian troubles Sultan Abdul Hamid's anger against England was not altogether unfounded ; for although in London good care was taken to keep aloof publicly from the disturbances in the Armenian mountains, the agitation of English agents in the North of Asia Minor is beyond all doubt. The Sultan was carefully informed of this both foolish and unreasonable movement. Whatever the Hintchakists and other revolutionary committees of the Armenian malcontents brewed in London, Paris, New York, Marseilles, &c., full knowledge of it was received in Yildiz ; the Armenians themselves had provided the secret service. As early as the autumn of 1890 the Sultan complained to me about these intrigues, and twelve months later he made use of the expression, "I tell you, I will soon settle those Armenians. I will give them a box on the ear which will make them smart and relinquish their revolutionary ambitions." With this "box on the ear" he meant the massacres which soon after were instituted. The Sultan kept his word. The frightful slaughter in Constantinople and many other places of Asia Minor has not unjustly stirred up the indignation of the Christian world, but on the other hand the fact should not have been lost sight of that Christian Russia and Austria in suppressing revolu-

tions in their own dominions have acted, perhaps, not quite so severely, but with no less blood-thirstiness. That his drastic measures roused the public opinion of all Europe against the Sultan was no secret to him. He was aware of the beautiful titles given to him, "Great Assassin," "Sultan Rouge," "Abdul the Damned," &c., and once touching upon the Western infatuation against his person, he seemed in the following remark to find a kind of apology for the cruelties perpetrated in his name. "In the face of the everlasting persecutions and hostilities of the Christian world," the Sultan said, "I have been, so to speak, compelled to take these drastic measures. By taking away Rumenia and Greece, Europe has cut off the feet of the Turkish State body. The loss of Bulgaria, Servia, and Egypt has deprived us of our hands, and now by means of this Armenian agitation they want to get at our most vital parts, tear out our very entrails—this would be the beginning of total annihilation, and this we must fight against with all the strength we possess." In truth, notwithstanding all the evident signs of a total downfall the Sultan still nursed high-flown ideas of regeneration and security for his Empire. He often spoke of the cancelling of capitulations and of the certain advantages to be derived from his Alliance schemes. He has always placed great confidence in the Panislamic movement which he inaugurated, and which he certainly directed very skilfully. His agents traverse India,

South Russia, Central Asia, China, Java, and Africa; they proclaim everywhere the religious zeal, the power and the greatness of the Khaliph; up to the present, however, they have succeeded only in making the birthday of the Sultan a day of public rejoicing throughout Islamic lands, and in preparing the threads wherewith to weave the bond of unity. One day, as we were talking about these plans, he denied them altogether, and pretended to be very much surprised. These schemes for the future were his particular hobby; he spoke of them only to his most intimate servants and court officials, and to no one besides, not even to his ministers. The latter he called fortune-hunters, who deserve no confidence. "How can I believe my ministers?" he said at one time. "When a while ago I sent for my police minister, he came into my presence quite intoxicated. I drove the swine out of the room and dismissed him next day." That he encouraged the evil, that with his strictly autocratic and absolutist ideas he prevented the growth of capable statesmen, that no clever politicians could possibly thrive under him—all this he would never realise, although I often hinted at it and reminded him of the Prophet's warning, "Ye shall consult one another." He was and always will be an incorrigible Arch-Turk, who in the shadow of his Divine reputation would have free disposal of all things; and when his First Secretary told him that I had been a *protégé* of the late Grand-Vizier Mahmud

Nedim Pasha, the friend of Ignatieff, he said, turning to me, "Yes, Mahmud Nedim Pasha was a singularly clever man, a true Turk and Moslem, and a faithful servant to his master."

I soon came to the conclusion that with a sovereign of this kind, there was not much good to be done, and without flatly contradicting him, I quietly adhered to my own political views. As I look at things now, it seems quite natural that I excited his displeasure, and that he looked askance at my English predilections. The Sultan expected of me unconditional approval of his political views; he wanted to have in me a friend, absolutely Turkish in my views, as opposed to the Christian world, and willing, like many a prominent man in Europe, to hold up the East as noble, sublime, humane, and just, and to put down the West as reprobate, crude, and rapacious. No, that was expecting a little too much of my Turkish sympathies! I have always been too much imbued with the high advantages of our Western culture, too fully convinced of the beneficial influences of nineteenth-century ideas, to lend myself to sing the unqualified praises of Asia—rotten, despotic, ready to die—and to exalt the Old World over the New! No, neither imperial favour nor any power on earth could have induced me to do this, and when the Sultan realised that, he began to treat me with indifference; he even told me once that he did not like children who could cling to two mothers,

and without actually showing me any hostility or dislike, as my international penmanship was not quite a matter of indifference to him, he dismissed me, to all appearance, graciously. He was undeceived, but I remained what I always have been, a friend of Turkey.

How it came about that, in spite of his ill-will, the Sultan for many years after still showed me favour, and even invited me more than once to visit Constantinople, I can only explain by the fact that, although distrusting everybody, even himself, he did not lose sight of the use my pen could be to him. Sultan Abdul Hamid, as I said before, had an indescribable dread of the public opinion of Europe, which he took into account in all his transactions; he always wanted to act the enlightened, liberal, patriotic, order-loving, and conscientious ruler. He always wanted to show off the very thin and light varnish of culture which a very defective education and a flying visit through Europe (1868) had given him. Without knowing French he would often interlard his Turkish conversation with French words and sayings, to impress the ambassadors and other exalted guests, just as in company with Moslem scholars he made a special point of introducing theological and technical terms, without ever rising above the level of a half-cultured Moslem. Thanks to his remarkable memory, he was never at a loss for such terms, but his actual familiarity with either

European or Asiatic culture was very slight, since his kind-hearted but far too lenient father had never kept his children to their books. Kemal Effendi, the tutor of the imperial prince, told me in the fifties quite incredible things about the indolence of his imperial pupil. Reshad Effendi, the heir presumptive, had a taste for Persian and Arabic, and had at an early age made some attempts at Persian poetry, but Hamid Effendi, the present Sultan, was not so easily induced to sit on the school bench. Harem intrigues and harem scandal were more to his liking, and if one wanted to know anything about the secrets of individual members of the imperial *gynécée*, one had but to go to Hamid Effendi for information. It is a great pity that this lively and really talented prince had not received a better education in his youth. Who knows but what he might have made a better sovereign on the throne of the Osmanlis?

My intercourse with this man was to me of exceptional interest, not so much in his capacity of prince, but rather as man and Oriental. When in the evening I was with him alone in the Chalet Kiosk we used to sit still, trying to read each other's thoughts, for the imperial rogue knew his man well enough; and after we had thus contemplated one another for some time, the Sultan would break the silence by some irrelevant remark, or occasionally he would ask me something about my Asiatic or European experiences. As it is not

seemly for a Khaliph, *i.e.*, a lawful descendant of Mohammed, to hold intimate conversation with an unbeliever, or, what is worse, to ask his advice, the Sultan used to treat me as an old, experienced, true believer, called me always by my Turkish name, Reshid Effendi, and particularly emphasised the same when at an audience pious or learned Moslems happened to be present. Sultan Abdul Hamid, one of the greatest *charmeurs* that ever was, knew always in some way or other how to fascinate his guests. He delighted in paying compliments, lighting the cigarette for his guest, with a civility vainly looked for amongst ordinary civilians.

Of course, his one aim and object was to captivate and charm his visitors with this extreme affability. Sometimes also he was quite theatrical in his demeanour; he could feign anger, joy, surprise, everything at his pleasure, and I shall never forget one scene provoked by a somewhat animated discussion of the Egyptian Question. In order to pacify his anger against England, I ventured to remark that after the settling of the Egyptian State debt the yearly tribute would be paid again. The Sultan misunderstood me, and concluding that I was speaking of redemption money, he jumped up from his seat and cried in a very excited voice, "What! do you think I shall give up for a price the land which my forefathers conquered with the sword?" His thin

legs shook in his wide trousers, his fez fell back on his neck, his hands trembled, and almost ready to faint he leaned back in his seat. And yet all this excitement was pretence, just as when another time in his zeal to persuade me to enter his service and to remain permanently in Stambul, he grasped both my hands, and with assurances of his unalterable favour, promised me a high position and wealth. What induced the sly, suspicious man to this extraordinary display of tenderness was undoubtedly my practical knowledge of Islamic lands and of Turkey in particular. More than once he said to me, "You know our land and our nation better than we do ourselves." My personal acquaintance with all circles of the Porte of former days was not much to his liking, neither did he like my popularity with the Turkish people, the result of many years of friendly intercourse with them; yet he had to take this into account, and *nolens volens* must keep on good terms with me. Curiously enough, devoted as he was to his severely despotic principles, this monarch sometimes had fits of singular mildness and gentleness. Once I was sitting with him till far into the night in the great hall of the Chalet Kiosk. It was the height of summer, and in the heat of the conversation his Majesty had become thirsty, and called to the attendant in the ante-room, "Su ghetirin" ("Bring water"). The attendant, who had probably fallen asleep, did not hear. The Sultan called twice,

three times, clapped his hands, but all in vain, and when I jumped up and called the man, the Sultan said to him, almost beseechingly, "Three times I have asked for water, and you have not given it me; I am thirsty, very thirsty." With any other Oriental despot the servant would have forfeited his head, but Abdul Hamid's character was the most curious mixture imaginable of good and bad qualities, which he exhibited according to the mood in which he happened to be.

Honestly speaking, these *tête-à-têtes* with the Sultan were anything but unmixed pleasure. Notwithstanding his pleasing manners and outward amiability, his sinister and scrutinising look had often a very unpleasant effect upon me. One evening, seated as usual alone with the Sultan in the Chit Kiosk, sipping our tea, I fancied my tea was not quite sweet enough, and while talking I stretched out my hand towards the sugar basin, which stood near the Sultan. He gave a sudden start and drew back on the sofa. The movement suggested that he thought I had intended an attack upon his person. Another time, it was after dinner, I was taking coffee in his company. I noticed that in the ardour of his conversation he was suddenly seized with an attack of shortness of breath. He actually gasped for air. The sight of his oppression was painful, and I could not help thinking what would be my fate if in one of these attacks the Sultan were to choke. One may

say it is foolish, and call me weak, but any one knowing something of life in an Oriental palace will agree with me that the situation was anything but a joke. Apart from this I got my full share of the moodiness of Oriental despotism; sometimes it was almost too much for my much-tried patience. In spite of politely worded invitations I often had to wait for days before I was received in audience. Four, six, eight days together did I wait in an antechamber, until at last I was told, "His Majesty extremely regrets, on account of pressing business, or on account of sudden indisposition, to have to delay the reception till the next day." The next day came, and again the same story, "the next day." I remember once, during a visit to Constantinople, to have packed and unpacked my effects five times, awaiting permission to return home. Complaints, entreaties, expostulations, all were of no avail, for the Muneddjim Bashi (Court Astrologer) regulates his Majesty's actions, and these ordinances are most strictly adhered to. My intercourse with the Sultan was certainly not perfectly harmonious. I did my utmost to preserve my influence over him, but at last I had to realise that all my trouble was in vain, and that my efforts would never bear any fruit.

And it could not well have been otherwise. His policy was partly of a purely personal nature, as with all Oriental despots; such policy, strictly conservative in tendency, was concerned

with the maintenance of an absolutely despotic *régime*. Partly, also, it was of necessity influenced by the temporary political constellations of the West. The indecision which characterises his least action is a result of the spirit which prevails in the imperial harem, where no one trusts another, where every one slanders his neighbour, and tries to deceive and annihilate him, where everything turns round the sun of imperial favour. Our diplomatists on the Bosphorus have often had to pay dearly for this characteristic of Abdul Hamid. At the time of the negotiations about the Egyptian Question Lord Dufferin once had to wait with his secretary in the Yildiz Palace for the Sultan's decision from ten o'clock in the morning till after midnight. Six times the draft of the treaty was put before him to sign, and each time it was returned in somewhat altered form until the English Ambassador, wearied to death at last, lost his patience, and at two o'clock in the morning returned with his suite to Therapia. Lord Dufferin had already retired to bed, and was fast asleep when he was roused by the arrival of a special messenger from the Sultan to negotiate about another proposal, but the English patience was exhausted and the fate of Egypt sealed. On other occasions there were similar and often more dramatic scenes, and even with simple dinner invitations it has often occurred that the ambassadors in question received a countermand only after they

had already started *en grande tenue* on the way to Yildiz.

As regards the distrust displayed by the ruler of Turkey, worried as he was on all sides, some excuse may be found for him, for true and unselfish friendships are unknown quantities in diplomatic intercourse. But Sultan Abdul Hamid behaved in the same manner towards his Asiatic subjects. He has always been a pessimist of the most pronounced type; he scented danger and treason wherever he went, and everything had to give way before his personal interests. "The future of Turkey and the well-being of the Ottoman nation are always being discussed, but of me and my dynasty nobody speaks," he said to me one day. To all intents and purposes he always behaved as if he were master and owner of all Turkey, and as nothing in the world could make him see differently, I very soon saw the fruitlessness of my endeavours, and in future I acted only the *rôle* of onlooker and observer.

A sovereign who for well-nigh thirty years has ruled and governed with absolute power, who has succeeded in carrying autocracy and absolutism to their limits, while the greatest as well as the very smallest concerns of the State and of society pass through his hands, such a sovereign runs great danger of becoming conceited and proud, since his servile surroundings continually extol and deify him beyond all measure. Sultan Abdul Hamid imagines

it is owing to his statesmanship that Turkey, after the unfortunate campaign of 1877, has not been completely annihilated, and that at present it not only exists, but is sought after by the Powers as their ally. Laughing roguishly, he said with reference to this, "There is no lack of suitors; I am courted by all, but I am still a virgin, and I shall not give my heart and hand to any of them;" but all the while he was in secret alliance with Russia. What Sultan Abdul Hamid is particularly proud of is his relation to the German Emperor, which is, as a matter of fact, his own work, and not at all approved of by the more cautious portion of his people. The confidential *tête-à-tête* between the Osmanli and the gifted Hohenzollern is unique in its kind and abounds in interesting incidents. The Emperor William II. admires the talent of the ruler in his friend, which in its autocratic bearing he would like to imitate if it were possible; but he is clever enough to discount the reward for this admiration in various concessional privileges, &c. Well-paid appointments for German officers, consignments of arms, concessions for railway lines, manufactures, &c., the German Emperor has obtained playfully, as it were, and he will get more still, for in the Imperial German the Sultan sees his only disinterested, faithful, and mighty protector, and he is firmly convinced that as long as this friendship continues no one will dare to touch him, although Turkey, *stante amicitia*, lost

Crete after the victorious termination of the war with Greece. The patriotic and progressive Turk, however, thinks otherwise. He has not a good word to say for the German Emperor, for he looks upon him as one of those friends who encourage the Padishah in his arrant absolutism, whose visits diminish the treasures of State, and who has checked the national development of free commercial life, taking all for Germany and leaving Turkey nothing but some high-sounding compliments which flatter the Sultan's pride.

And so this political accomplishment of Abdul Hamid is most severely censured in Turkey itself, and the much extolled alliance with Germany may, in the event of a change on the throne, meet with quite unexpected surprises. With me the Sultan never discussed this relationship, only his favourite son, Burhaneddin, told me of his sympathies for the Kaiser, whose language he was learning. No true friend of Turkey, I think, can have much against an alliance with Germany; it would work very well, only Germany should advise the Sultan to introduce certain reforms in his country to raise the spirit of the nation, and instead of this wild absolutist *régime*, to work at the cultivation of capable officials. I have often told the Sultan so in writing, but lately my memoranda have remained without effect, for we have been deceived in one another. I have come to the conclusion that, with all my science and all my ambition, I can

never be of much use to Turkey ; and the Sultan has realised that he could not make a willing tool of me, and that therefore I am of no use to him. I must not omit to mention, however, that the greatest obstacle to a mutual understanding between the Sultan and myself lies in the political views we hold as to the most beneficial alliance for Turkey. While the Sultan, by his personal relations with the Emperor William II., thinks to screen himself securely against all possible danger, and as far as appearances go, likes to be exclusively Germanophile, he has not forgotten that the Russian sword of Damocles hangs over his head. He knows but too well that Russia has her thumb on his throat, that Asia Minor from the side of Erzerum is open to the troops of the Czar, that the Russian fleet could sack Constantinople within two or three days, and that this imminent danger, if not entirely warded off, would at any rate be considerably mitigated by submissive humility and feigned friendliness. Hence his peculiar complaisance and amenableness towards the court of St. Petersburg, and his behaviour altogether as if he were a vassal already of the "White Padishah on the Neva." Considering this state of affairs, it is not very astonishing that the rumour spread in Europe of a secret treaty between Turkey and Russia—a treaty according to which the Sultan had engaged himself not to fortify the Bosphorus at the entrance of the Black Sea, and

not to erect new fortifications in the north of Asia Minor, and other similar concessions. This treaty is said to bear the date 1893, and when the matter was discussed by the European Press, and I asked for information from the First Secretary of the Sultan, Sureja Pasha, the latter wrote me in a letter dated September 3, 1893, as follows :—

VERY HONOURED FRIEND!—His Imperial Majesty, my sublime Master, has always held in high esteem your feelings of friendship in the interests of Turkey, and your attacks on Russia, which has done so much harm to Turkey, have not remained unnoticed. But you know full well that nothing in this world happens without cause, and that the war Russia waged against us was also founded on certain causes. All this belongs to the past. To-day the Sublime Porte is on the best of terms with *all* the Powers; there is no necessity for any private treaties, and when the newspapers speak of a private treaty between Turkey and Russia, this is nothing more or less than a groundless and idle invention. In case such a treaty had been necessary, Turkey, being in no way restricted in its movements, would have notified and published the facts."

Later on I also touched upon this subject in conversation with the Sultan. We were speaking about the comments made in Europe regarding the

negligence in the fortifications at the entrance to the Black Sea, when the Sultan interrupted me and said, "Why should Europe criticise this? I have a house with two doors; what does it matter to anybody if I choose to close the one and open the other?" In a word, the Sultan has given me several irrefutable proofs that the persistent anti-Russian tendency of my publications was inconvenient to him, and that he would be better pleased if I attacked England or kept quiet altogether. Of course he would like best of all to banish pen and ink altogether from the world, and as it was impossible for me to support him in his absolute autocratic principles, a cooling of our mutual relationship was unavoidable.

The breach between us was made still wider by the publication of my pamphlet *La Turquie d'aujourd'hui et d'avant quarante ans*, Paris, 1898, in which I tried to refute the thesis—so constantly and erroneously advanced in Europe—that the Turks as a nation are incapable of being civilised, by comparing the state of their culture as it is now and as it was forty years ago. Naturally in a study of this kind I had to draw the connection between the progress of culture and the political decline of the land, and the question why, if the Turks are really advancing in culture, they should politically be overtaken by Rumania, Servia, Bulgaria, and Greece, I could only answer by pointing to the autocratic and absolutist tendencies of the

Sultan. Only the court and the unconscionable clique reigning there are to blame for the present decline of Turkey. With this article I increased my popularity in Turkey, but at court they were, of course, anything but pleased. Nevertheless the Sultan invited me to pay him a visit; I did so, and the reception I had was highly characteristic. While the Padishah thanked me for the service I had rendered to the Turkish nation, the offended autocrat took my measure with angry looks, without, however, betraying his anger. It was interesting to watch the internal struggle of the offended tyrant, and I consider it only reasonable that henceforth he would have no more to do with me.

Thus ended my intimate intercourse with Sultan Abdul Hamid. The only benefit it has been to me was a rubbing up of my impressions of life in the Near East, a renewal of old relationships, and the editing of a few valuable old Slav manuscripts which I found in the treasure-house of the Sultan, and which were lent me for a considerable length of time. But the renewal of my acquaintance with the Orient was void of that charm which it had for me on my first visit. The East and myself are both thirty years older; the East has lost much of the glory of its former splendour, and I have lost the vigour of my youth. I fancied myself an elderly man who, after thirty years meeting again the adored beauty of his youthful days, misses the wealth of her locks, the fire in her eyes, the bright-

ness of her rosy cheeks. Old Stambul, the Bosphorus, and Pera—everything was changed. The Sultan's mad love of extravagance, the unfortunate war of 1878, and above all the loss of Bulgaria—in fact nearly the whole of Rumania—had reduced the dominating class almost to beggary. Gone were the rich Konaks in Stambul, empty the once glorious yalis (villas) on the Bosphorus, and of the Effendi world, flourishing and well-to-do in my time, only a few miserable vestiges remained.

The Christian element, as compared with the Moslem, has increased enormously; the European quarter of the city is full of life and animation, and the Turk, always wont to walk with bowed head, now bends it quite low on his breast as he loiters among the noisy, busy crowds of the Christian populace. He is buried in thought; but whether he will be able to pull himself together and recover himself is as yet an open question.

When speaking of my renewed visits to Turkey and my personal intercourse with the Sultan, I made mention of my English sympathies; and I feel bound to say a word about the rumours then prevalent, which made me out to be a secret political agent of England, the more so since a member of Parliament, Mr. Summers, has questioned the Conservative Government regarding this matter. I have never at any time stood in any official relation to the English Government. My intercourse with the Conservative and Liberal statesmen on the Thames

and on the Hugli (Calcutta) has always been of a strictly private nature, and, just as my utterances in the daily papers were taken notice of by the public, so my occasional memoranda to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have been accepted as the private information of an expert, friendly to the cause of England—information for which nobody asked me, and for which labour therefore I could claim no compensation from anybody. This anomalous position of mine was touched upon by the Central Asiatic writer, Mr. Charles Marvin, in his *Merv, the Queen of the World*[1] issued, in 1881. He there blames the English Government for having neglected me, and for leaving me in poverty, in spite of all my services. As regards this, I must say that I had at one time a modest yearly income, while working with all my might for the defence of India, a possession from which England derived in commercial profits alone many million pounds sterling; but I never suffered actual poverty, and it never entered my mind to take steps to obtain material acknowledgment of my services. English statesmen least of all thought of making any such acknowledgment. They looked upon me merely as a writer in pursuit of a purely platonic object, and this English cynicism went so far that when I published, in 1885, my Osbeg Epic, the "Scheibaniade," entirely at my own cost, and asked for a subscription for twenty copies,

[1] Pp. 19–21.

the India Office declined the offer, although this work furnished so many data for the history of Baber, the founder of the Mongol dominion in India. The supposition, therefore, that my journalistic labours, although appreciated in England, ever met with any material recognition on the part of the Government, is altogether false. In after years I had an offer to enter the English service, but this I never entertained for a moment; and when on the Bosphorus I furthered English interests, I did so from the standpoint of European peace, as an opponent of the overbearing power of despotic Russia, and as a Hungarian whose native land has common interests with England in the Near East. Of course such motives bore no weight with the Sultan. He judges everybody by his own standard; and when I tried to defend myself against such accusations, and even one day quoted to him the saying of Mohammed, "*El fakru fakhri* ("Poverty is my pride"), he took the remark with a diabolical smile, and turned the conversation into another channel.

I must confess the character of Sultan Abdul Hamid has always been a riddle to me. I strained every nerve to penetrate him, but all in vain. Brilliant qualities and incredible weaknesses were always at strife in him. The man and the ruler were constantly at war with one another, and in the same manner his Oriental views always came into collision with the ever more pressing demands

of modern civilisation. Fear and suspicion were naturally at the bottom of this moral condition, and if from time to time he would have recovered himself, and listened to the dictates of his heart —for I did not find him heartless, as he is generally supposed to be—the instruments of his despotic arbitrariness kept him back, and made him commit deeds which in the eyes of the world were rightly condemned. In keeping with his own character was also the quality of the officials around him, who after the decline of the Porte acted as ministers of State. Divided into various cliques according to their personal interests, the secretaries, adjutants, chamberlains, court-marshals, body-servants, &c., have created quite a chaos of intrigues, plots, and calumnies round the person of their ruler, which he was quite able to cope with when in the full vigour of his manhood, and with his marvellous perspicacity could fathom at a glance. But even Sultan Abdul Hamid could not be expected to do superhuman things; physically never very strong, his nervous system at last grew perceptibly weaker, and in the thirtieth year of his reign he became very infirm. The reins of government fell from his hands, and gradually he sank from a ruler to being ruled over, and he fancied himself secure against all danger only in the mutual envy, malice, and hatred which he had provoked among those immediately surrounding him. In this terrible position the Sultan himself

was most to be pitied, and this doleful picture of the so-called autocrat I have often had occasion to contemplate at close quarters. Great State cares, pressing financial troubles, the threatening grouping of the European Powers, and the fearful phantom of an internal revolution, all of which tormented the Sultan, left him neither rest nor peace. The Sultan's fear of Young Turkey was exaggerated, for in Turkey revolutions are not instigated by the masses, but by the upper classes, and since these were quite impoverished and dependent on their official position, a revolt against the Crown is not very probable nowadays, especially as the old party of the time of the forcible dethronement of Abdul-aziz exists no more, and the Osmanlis darkly brooding about the future of their land cannot so easily be roused from their sleep. If Sultan Abdul Hamid had been a little less despotic, and had taken account a little more of the liberal ideas of the more enlightened Osmanlis, he would have saved himself much trouble and many a sleepless night. But he is stubborn and firmly resolved to persevere with the *régime* of terrorism he has instituted. Hence his misfortune, hence his suffering. Indeed, the man had deserved a better fate. He is not nearly such a profligate as he is represented to be. He is more fit than many of his predecessors; he wants to benefit his land, but the means he has used were bound to have a contrary effect. I have received from Sultan Abdul Hamid many tokens of his

favour and kindness, and I owe him an everlasting debt of gratitude. It grieves me, here, where I am speaking of my personal relations with him, to have to express opinions which may be displeasing to him, but writers may not and cannot become courtiers, and even in regard to crowned heads, the old saying still holds true, "*Amicus Plato, sed magis amica veritas.*"

My Intercourse with Nasreddin Shah and his Successor

PROF. VAMBÉRY AND HIS TARTAR, 1864.

To face Page 393.

CHAPTER XII

MY INTERCOURSE WITH NASREDDIN SHAH AND HIS SUCCESSOR

FOLLOWING up my intercourse with the Sultan of Turkey, I must not omit to relate the episode of my second meeting with the King of Persia. It was on the occasion of the Shah's third visit to Europe that I met him in Budapest.

Thirty years ago I had been presented to him as a Dervish who had visited Central Asia and spent many years among the Turcomans, at that time held in great fear by the Persians. I now appeared before him as representative of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and was not surprised that he did not at once recognise me. When at the head of the Academicians I welcomed him in a Persian speech in the pillared hall of the Academy palace, the good Persian monarch was quite amazed and hastily turning to his courtiers, inquired, "*In kist?*" ("Who is that?"). They told him my name and function, and made some comments in a low voice, whereupon the cunning Persian exclaimed,

"*Belli! belli!*" ("Of course"), "Vambéry!" He maintained (which I take the liberty to doubt) that he remembered me; but he warmly shook hands with me, and said to the Hungarian Minister standing at his side, "*Il parle bien, très bien notre langue!*" I do not wonder that my speech, in the Shirazi dialect and delivered in true Oriental style, took him by surprise, for as he afterwards told me, on the whole Continent he had not met with any scholar who could speak Persian idiomatically and without foreign accent. What did seem to me somewhat odd was a remark in his Journal (p. 378) that there were, even in Persia, few orators who for elegance and force of speech could compete with me, a compliment which struck me as particularly strange from the mouth of the Persian king. I remained three days in attendance on Nasreddin Shah, and had ample opportunity to admire the marvellous progress made by this Oriental since the time when I knew him at Teheran in 1864. Nasreddin Shah was the first sovereign of the True Believers who had learned to speak French tolerably well, and if he did make a little too much show of this accomplishment, seeing that his knowledge was but very superficial, it must be admitted that his judgment in matters of art, his knowledge of geography and palæontology, and his acquaintance with the genealogical relationships of the various kingdoms of Europe was most astonishing. In any case, he surpassed in knowledge of our

countries and towns, our manners and customs, all magnates and princes of the Moslem East, not excepting even the Khedive Ismail Pasha and the late Sir Salar Jung. As we saw more of one another he did not hesitate to express his opinion about many of our social and political views. So, for instance, being an Asiatic *pur sang* he detested Liberalism, and if it had not been for the dangerous nearness which made him turn against Russia, he would have looked upon the Czar as the model of sovereign greatness and the Russian *régime* as the ideal form of government. Naturally, the French republic was an abomination to him, the most woeful absurdity, and he could not understand how a society where, as he maintained, no one commands and no one obeys, a land without a ruler, *i.e.*, a sovereign, can possibly exist.

In his political utterances he was a good deal more cautious; he always made an evasive answer to my insinuations. Once, sailing on the Danube, I remarked that the Karun is wider but not so long as the Danube, the Kadjar prince looked gravely at me and said, "Thank God, no!" ("*If it had been the English would before now have taken Teheran*," was my mental comment.) But in spite of his great reserve and cautiousness in political matters, I got a pretty clear insight into his political views. He had not for the future of his land the same bold confidence as his royal brother on the throne of the Osmanli, for while the latter's plans reach far into

the future, and to all appearances, at least, are of a very exalted nature, especially those relating to Panislamism, the Kadjar monarch devotes all his energies to the welfare of his dynasty, or rather of his own person. "*L'État c'est moi*" is also Sultan Abdul Hamid's motto, but the glorious past of his dynasty and his people awakens in him great and exalted ideas, the accomplishment of which he never doubts, while Nasreddin Shah, as the offspring of a Turcoman family, only lately come into power, and, intimidated by the danger which surrounded him on all sides, hardly dared to think of the distant future. In their personalities they are also very different. Sultan Abdul Hamid, although inferior in European culture to his *cher frère* on the throne of Persia, is shy and timid by nature, more affable and generous than Nasreddin Shah, who, in spite of all his European manners, remained the Asiatic despot and comported himself with all the peculiar pride and strictness of the Oriental ruler. His Grand-Vizier had sometimes to stand for hours before him, and when he wanted some information or other from me, I was often kept standing for a considerable time, regardless of my great fatigue; and he used closely to scrutinise my face if I dared to express an opinion different from his. In his character he certainly was more Oriental than the Sultan, and considered this severity as indispensable to his sovereign dignity.

I was very much amused with the airs the

Persian king put on, as he went about bedizened with diamonds, emeralds, rubies, and other jewels. Although his dynasty had been founded by a condottiere of the lowest rank, viz., Mehemmed Aga Khan, and as grandson of Feth Ali Shah, a cousin of this Aga Khan's, he was only the fourth Kadjar on the throne of Iran, he always wanted to parade the antiquity of his race. Before me he especially prided himself on his descent from the Mongol chief, Kadjar Noyan, and when I dared to question the correctness of this genealogy, merely brought forward by Persian historians to flatter their monarch, he looked at me quite angrily and ejaculated that "the sovereigns of the West were nothing but parvenus compared to their brother monarchs of the East." Persia, in fact, is the only land in Moslem Asia which can boast of a hereditary nobility, in a miserable condition, it is true, for not only Khans and Mirzas, but even royal princes may be found as drivers, house servants, and artisans of various kinds, but this does not prevent one from being proud of one's noble blood, and when Nasreddin Shah was in a good temper he expressed his astonishment that European counts, princes, and dukes attempted to be on a familiar footing with him, who could find his equal only among crowned heads. It is curious that the Turks even, who on account of their nomadic antecedents have never had any hereditary nobility, always try to make themselves out as aristocrats. Sultan Abdul

Medjid was highly pleased when the French poet Lamartine, whom he had invited to his court and afterwards presented with a country seat near Brussa, called his attention to the fact that after the Bourbons the Osmanli was the oldest dynasty in Europe. The high dignitaries of the Porte, frequently tracing their descent from simple peasants, labourers, or shepherds, had at one time serious thoughts of setting up coats-of-arms, and much regretted the religious restriction which forbids their taking some animal for their device. Human weakness is after all the same in the East and in the West, and in spite of the strongly democratic tendencies of the Arabian prophet, we may yet live to see Islam adopting hereditary nobility with many other evils of European culture. In the personality of Nasreddin Shah I have always detected this curious mixture of East and West, of the old and the new aspect of life which we find in so many neophytes of European culture in the Moslemic East. The Iranian despot held in particular favour Malcolm Khan and Jahya Khan, and the Europeans who for a time were physicians in ordinary to his Majesty.

Doctors Cloquet, Polak, and Tholozan instructed him in many things, and point for point the influence of one or the other could be detected in his manners and behaviour. That he always wanted to act the Grand Seigneur, and ostentatiously displayed his Frenchified airs, must

chiefly be attributed to his Iranian boastfulness; he always wished to appear as the perfect European gentleman, and there was a time when at the court no one but his Majesty was allowed to wear a starched European shirt. Nasreddin Shah inherited many characteristics from his grandfather, Feth Ali Shah—I refer here especially to his love of show and tyrannical arbitrariness—but he lacked his grandfather's affability and kindly generosity. Nasreddin Shah was sometimes even particularly miserly, hence the story, circulated during his lifetime, of his fabulous private wealth, of which, however, after his death very little was to be found.

The European Press has delivered most unjustly severe criticisms upon the personality of this Oriental prince, and made fun of his Oriental manners. It is only natural that he should commit occasional mistakes of etiquette, for what Western sovereign or prince when visiting at an Eastern court would not be guilty of similar blunders? It is said that in Berlin, after dining at the royal table, he turned to the Emperor William and the Empress Augusta and loudly belched, which in Central Asia is an expression of gratitude for the hospitality received and always acknowledged with good grace. At dinner with the Prince of Wales at Marlborough House he is said to have thrown the asparagus stumps over his back on to the floor, and, in order not to shame his guest, the Prince, now King of England, and all the other guests imme-

diately did the same, greatly to the disgust of the attendants. Quite a collection of similar anecdotes were at the time in circulation about him, but I think they must be grossly exaggerated, for Nasreddin Shah never neglected to make strict inquiry into the customs of the lands he visited, and more than once I have given him information upon minor details. The Persian king felt much freer in Europe than in his own land. In Teheran, when he went out for a drive, a long row of attendants marched on either side of him, who, armed with long staves, cleared every one out of the way. In Budapest it happened that a poor labourer's wife pressed up quite close to him to admire the great diamonds on his coat. I motioned to the woman to go out of the way, but the King said, "Let her come; she wants to see my jewels close to." He even stopped a minute or two to let the woman stare at him to her heart's content. In a word, the man was better than his reputation, and when in May, 1896, a day before the Jubilee of his fifty years' reign, he fell a victim to the murderous bullet of Riza Khan, I thought to myself the man deserved a better end, for as a matter of fact he had to pay with his life for the tyranny of his officials. At first it was supposed that Riza Khan belonged to the secret society of the Babis, but, as was proved later on, he took this means to revenge himself for the unheard-of injustice of the Governor of Kerman, against which he had vainly sought protection.

Eleven years after my meeting with Nasreddin I met with his son, Mozaffareddin Shah, who in 1900 on his return from Paris passed through the capital of Hungary. From my *Wanderings and Experiences in Persia* the reader will recall that I had made the acquaintance of the young ruler in Tabris in 1862, where, a nine year old boy and the heir-apparent to the throne, he occupied the position of Governor of Azerbaidshan. Physically weak and insignificant as he was then, I found him now sickly and quite broken down. Contrexéville and Marienbad were resorted to in vain to relieve his intense suffering, and the undeniable signs of disease impressed upon his features clearly revealed the desperate struggle that he fought within himself. The poor prince was really worthy of a better fate.

Being by nature timid and reticent, the very strict education which his father had deemed it necessary to give him had robbed him of all energy. He liked best to lose himself in quiet contemplation, and in his childish simplicity was hardly a fit ruler for a land so miserably desolate as Persia, nor was he likely to carry out his good intentions of leading his people into the way of modern culture. He was very pleasant with me, more so than his father had been. He hardly remembered our meeting at Tabris, but he had carefully read the memoirs of his father's travels, in which my small personality had received most

laudatory mention, and so he was prepared to meet me long before he arrived at Budapest. On the journey from Vienna to Budapest he had asked several times if I was still alive, and if he would be sure to see me at Budapest. Arrived at the station, where he was received by the son of the Archduke Joseph and the Hungarian State Ministers, he looked round inquiringly and said, "*Vambéry kudjast?*" ("Where is Vambéry?"). I was called; he pressed my hand in the friendliest manner, and straightway invited me to come with him to the hotel. I did as he asked me, and during his stay in the Hungarian capital was frequently with him. These visits led to a more intimate intercourse, and I found out (1) that the much-to-be-pitied-king was very ill, and that the throne of Iran was not at all the right place for him; (2) that he had the best intentions in the world, was quite alive to the superior advantages of modern culture, and had a great desire to reform his country if only he had the necessary energy, money, and men. But all three unfortunately failed him, as well as all other means, and when I gave him a picture of Persia's future in its regenerate condition, with railways, streets, manufactories, and similar advantages of modern culture, he looked straight before him and said, "*Belli, belli! leikin wakit mikhahed*" ("Very well, very well, but that will take time"). Also in discussing political questions I found him less close than his father, who loved to give himself the

appearance of a Persian Bismarck. Mozaffareddin expressed himself quite freely and frankly about the political condition of his land, and when I remarked jokingly that in Europe he was looked upon as a partisan of Russia, because in Tabris as heir to the throne he had complied with all Russia's demands, he laughed out loud and said, "Am I the only one who in default of counter-arms has feigned friendship for this mighty, ambitious opponent?" He had not much to say in favour of England, although he agreed with me that this country would never do any harm to Persia. "But," said he, "Britain's friendship is cold as ice, and has always expressed itself in empty words." And perhaps he was not altogether wrong. He was very much down on the politics of Lord Salisbury, who had declined his support to a contemplated Persian loan in London, Persia thus being compelled to borrow money from Russia. Referring to the riskiness of this step, the king remarked, "What were we to do? When my father died it was said that he had left private means to the amount of about four million pounds, and that these moneys were packed away in chests in the cellar. There was not a word of truth in all this. Instead of money my father left debts, and when I came to the throne I was unable to pay not merely the State officials, but even the court expenses and the servants. I was forced to get a loan from somewhere, and England drove me into the arms of Russia."

Taking it altogether, Mozaffareddin Shah earnestly desired to reform his land thoroughly, and in its internal arrangements to introduce many of the modernisations which had particularly struck him in his European travels. Unfortunately the good man did not know where to begin and what means to use to attain his object. Discouraged and embittered by the everlasting wrangling and quarrelling in his immediate *entourage*, he seemed to stand in mortal dread of his Grand-Vizier, Ali Asghar Khan. This man, the son of a Georgian renegade from the Caucasus, had practically made the Shah the unwilling tool of his intriguing and rare abilities. He comported himself as a servant, but was in reality the master of his master and the ruler of Persia. I was often an eye-witness when the two were together. The Shah, apathetically seated in his easy chair, would speak with as much authority as the words of his first minister were servile and submissive; but scarcely had he felt the piercing glance of the latter than he would suddenly stop short and sink back in his armchair. Behind the door listened his secretary and faithful servant, who occasionally made his presence known by a low cough, upon which the Vizier would angrily turn towards the door, and strongly accentuating the submissive words continue his harangue. Master of the situation and with an insatiable desire for power and gain, the Grand-Vizier might possibly have been useful to the country if the violent op-

position of his many rivals had not occupied all his energy, and the secret hostility of high dignitaries and the rivalry of European ambassadors at court had not effectually frustrated all attempts at any healthy reform. Even as Nasreddin's various journeys to Europe remained fruitless for Persia, so it was with the efforts made by his son. After his return from Europe the Shah hastened to change the cut and the colour of the uniform of certain court officials. High-flown orders were issued, but not followed up; the money borrowed from the Russians soon came to an end; anarchy, misery, and confusion were bound to increase apace.

To complete the above notes about my intercourse with the Oriental princes and grandees, I will attempt to throw some light upon their private life and mental condition, points which would not be open to a foreigner in their intercourse with them, but which could not be hidden from me, the supposed Asiatic. The personality of the Oriental ruler is still more or less a curiosity in Europe; he is still gazed at and admired as something out of the common; and naturally so, for the attributes of Oriental Majesty are always extravagantly magnified, and, candidly speaking, our minds are still somewhat under the spell of the "Thousand and One Nights" stories, although current literature has here and there somewhat ruthlessly torn away the magic veil which surrounds these demi-

gods of our imagination. Demigods they are no longer to their own subjects even, for their crowns have lost too many of the jewels whose brilliancy dazzled the eyes of the beholders, and the source is dry which furnished the means wherewith the faithfulness and loyalty of their subjects could be secured. I have been on intimate terms with two Sultans, two Shahs, and several Khans; I have watched them closely, and I must honestly say that I consider their position anything but an enviable one; for with a few exceptions they are more ruled over than ruling, and in spite of their apparent omnipotence, the fear with which they inspire those nearest them is not nearly so great as the fear to which they themselves are exposed in their constant anxiety about their personal safety. When late in the evening I was sitting quite alone in one of the apartments of the Yildiz Palace, and in the stillness of the night was startled by the echo of the dull, heavy step of the patrol passing close under the windows, I often thought to myself "What in all the world can compensate for such a terrible existence?" I will admit that Sultan Abdul Hamid is more anxious and timorous than many of his Oriental brother sovereigns, for his exaggerated precautions are rightly ridiculed, but from the fact that he never feels safe by day or by night, never sleeps peacefully, that with all he eats and drinks he thinks of poison, and that on all occasions and everywhere he scents danger, for such an existence the greatest power

and majesty, all the glory in the world and all its submissive homage are but a poor exchange and in nowise adequate compensation for all the quaking and trembling that it involves. A quiet and peaceful life is practically impossible at an Oriental court, considering the everlasting quarrelling, intriguing, and jealousy prevailing among the servants and officials. All covet the favour of the unfortunate autocrat, each one tries to outdo the other, each one seeks the destruction of his neighbour, and when to this pandemonium are added the intrigues of the womenfolk in the harem, it is easy to see how little joy there is in the life of an Oriental despot, nay, rather how deplorable is the fate of such a monarch.

In cases where conceit has a stronger hold upon the senses, where the ruler in his diseased fancy behaves himself like a superhuman being, as, for instance, Sultan Abdul Aziz, such an one knows but little fear and in the shelter of his imaginary security manages to make his existence fairly tolerable. The story is told of this latter Sultan that during his European journey in 1867, when making a pleasure trip on the Rhine to Coblentz, he asked of those with him whether this canal had been dug for his special benefit, and when in Budapest on board one of the Danube steamers the Turkish Consul, Commandant A., a cultured officer educated in Europe, met him and saluted in European fashion, the Sultan in my presence

turned to Fuad Pasha and remarked: "Why did not this rude fellow kiss my feet?" This Sultan, half mad as he was, who decorated horses, dogs, and rams, who spent many millions on useless buildings, was little troubled with anxiety and fear, up to the memorable night when he was informed of his deposition; but other despots are in constant dread of their lives. Nasreddin Shah, even in his hunting lodge in Djadjerud, never neglected to have his couch surrounded by a company of soldiers; and his son, Mozaffareddin Shah, now on the throne, keeps awake for whole nights together for fear of being attacked and murdered. Can anything be more awful?

Of late years Oriental despots have come to the conclusion that in foreign lands, among the unbelievers, they are safer, freer, and altogether happier than in their own country. Abdul Ahad, the Emir of Bokhara, visits the Russian baths of Pyatigorsk in preference to any other, and from the frequent visits of the Persian kings to Europe it is very evident that the Shehinshahs of Iran, notwithstanding their Asiatic despotism, find in the land of the Franks—whose very touch defileth, in the eyes of the Shiites—more of pleasure and recreation than they can ever enjoy at home. In Teheran when the Shah rides or drives out, two long rows of Ferrashes (attendants) precede him as already mentioned, armed with long staves, to keep the beloved subjects at a safe distance and to clear

the way. Windows and doors are tightly shuttered and curtained to prevent any one from setting eyes on their lord and master; the sanctity (otherwise security) of the ruler's sublime person demands this. When the Shah comes to a European city crowds of curious Westerners receive him; he is cheered and welcomed, and the homage of the public pleases him, and makes him feel stronger and more confident than before. And then there is the courtesy he meets with at our courts; he fancies himself on equality with the powerful sovereigns of the West; all this increases his self-respect, and therein lies the special charm of his European travels.

If here in Europe we have been under the impression that the experiences gained in these visits to Western lands would be used in the interests of Western culture and for the civilising of his own land, we have been far too sanguine in our expectations, for these pleasure trips of Oriental sovereigns have never benefited their respective countries. On the contrary, they drain the land's resources. With his three journeys to Europe Nasreddin Shah has utterly ruined the finances of Persia, already in a very unsound condition. They did not lead to any profitable innovations, and it is a well-known fact that the travels of his son Mozaffareddin Shah were paid for by a Russian loan, originally intended for the economic and administrative amelioration of the land.

No, these Asiatic demigods do not lie on a bed

of roses. Their life is bare and lonely, their enjoyment full of anxiety and fear, the hundreds of thousands who writhe before them in the dust and do them homage with bombastic titulations are their greatest enemies, and the worst victims of despotism are the despots themselves. Can one be surprised that I brought no rosy reminiscences from the Oriental courts?

The Struggle's End, and yet no End

CHAPTER XIII

THE STRUGGLE'S END, AND YET NO END

THE preceding autobiographical notes give in broad outline the experiences and varied fortunes of my career from childhood to old age. They give, so to speak, the material picture of an unusual life, with all its varieties of light and shade, the struggles and adventures of the tailor's apprentice, private tutor, student, servant, Effendi, Dervish, and international writer. The details of this picture are, after all, but the outside wrappings, the shell, not the core or inner substance. They do not depict adequately the mental struggles and sufferings which have marked all these different phases of my existence, and which each in their turn have deeply influenced my thoughts and reflections. The enumeration of certain facts may, to some extent, gratify one's personal vanity, but since the empty satisfaction of self-glorification is hardly an adequate return for all the bitter sufferings of my past life, I must complete my story by giving expression to my reflections resulting from a careful comparison of certain institutions,

manners, and customs in Asiatic and European society. These reflections, the chief factors of the transformation of my mental life, are very possibly shared by many others, and explained in various ways, but the manner in which I gained my experience was rather out of the ordinary, for before me no European or Asiatic ever acted so many different parts on the world's stage in two continents, and I will therefore endeavour to draw a comparison between some institutions, manners, and customs of society in Asia and Europe. I will reveal a picture of my mental condition when, saturated with Asiatic ways of thinking, I made the acquaintance of various European countries, and how, when comparing the two worlds, I came to the conclusion that here, as there, shortsightedness, prejudice, prepossession, and want of objectiveness prevented the forming of sound and just opinions.

When first I left the West to enter the Asiatic world I had but a vague theoretical knowledge of the lands and peoples of Europe, gathered from a study of the literatures of the various Western nations, but I had no practical acquaintance with any of them. My first experiences of Turkish society in Stambul—which, in spite of the introduction of many Western customs, still at bottom bears a decided Asiatic stamp—together with the charm of novelty and my decided Oriental predilections, were in many respects of a pleasing nature. The kindly reception and the friendly treatment extended to

the stranger regardless of his antecedents, are bound to charm and captivate the recipient. One feels at once at home everywhere, and a cursory comparison of the two kinds of culture is decidedly in favour of the Old World. Afterwards—that is, when one has spent some time among the Asiatics, and has obtained an intimate knowledge of their views of religion, men, and the world in general—a certain feeling of monotony, indifference, and sleepiness creeps over us. Our blood becomes sluggish, we yawn and fidget while the Oriental, always imperturbable, sits unmoved, with evident satisfaction, gazing up at the sky.

Gradually, the more I became familiar with the inner Asiatic world, these feelings took possession of me. In Persian society these thoroughly Asiatic features worried me, but in Central Asia, where the world is eight hundred years older, I positively shuddered at what I saw. The very things which, on my first acquaintance with Asiatic life, had pleased me, I now recognised as the causes of its decay, its tyranny, and its misery. The Old World, never at any time free from the defects and vices which now, in its ruined condition, stare us in the face, became despicably mean in my estimation, and unworthy of men, and with longing eyes I turned to the West again. I cannot describe the feeling of delight with which I crossed the Eastern borders of our modern world; with each day's journey I breathed more freely. I rejoiced to see the last of

the ruins, the misery, the sterility of the older world, and the pictures which to my heated imagination, partly because of their novelty, had had so much fascination for me in my younger days, now made me shudder when I thought of them.

Such was my state of mind on returning from Asia. If before starting on my Oriental travels I had been in a position to obtain a deeper insight into the religious, social, and political conditions of Europe than lay within the reach of the poor, self-taught scholar, my impressions and estimate of Asia might have been different, and the result of my comparative study of the two cultures might have been more of an objective nature. But there, as here, I came as a man, who, under the magic of the first impression, saw everything in a rosy light, and was pleased with everything, and only afterwards, when the cold light of reality and of clearer perception showed me everything in its right light, I began to look upon Europe with quite different eyes, and my opinion about the actions of the Western world became considerably modified. And now, in the evening of my life, roaming the horizon of rich experience with unprejudiced eyes, and noting the light and shady sides of both the Old and the New World, of Asiatic and European culture; now that no personal interests and no prejudices obscure my vision, now I see and judge quite differently, and I count it my duty to acquaint the reader with these modified views, the more so

as I know by experience how astonishingly small is the number of critics who, free from the trammels of religion and nationality, have devoted themselves to the comparative study of the old and the new culture. The clatter of the chains can always be heard in the praise or disapproval of our critics. On this side, as on the other, partiality has blocked the way to truth ; and since the new century has, in many respects, opened the way to free thought, we can now unreservedly and without fear discuss the good and the evil, the advantages and disadvantages, of the two worlds. Those who have read my travels, and realise the miseries, sufferings, and vicissitudes to which I was exposed through the barbarism, anarchy, and desolation of the Asiatic world, will be surprised that I discovered large spots on the highly-praised sun of our modern culture, and saw caricatures where we expected to find noble ideals for the benefit of humanity. Considering many of my earlier views on these matters, I may be accused of precipitancy and inconsistency, but the judgment of mature age easily redeems the errors of youth, and improvement and perfecting are generally the outcome of former mistakes and errors. After these few remarks I will now try to put into words the impressions made upon me by particular instances of our manners and customs, our religious, social, and political life, all of which have given me much food for thought.

1. Religion.

Asia is a religious world *par excellence*. Religion animates all phases and fibres of human existence. It does not confine itself to the relations between Creator and creature, but it also governs political and social life; it penetrates everything; it enters into the most secret thoughts and aspirations of the human mind; it rules the course of the earthly body; it creates laws and orders daily life; it teaches us how to dress, feed, and comport ourselves; also in what manner we must eat, drink, and love—in a word, it is the one all-pervading instrument to secure happiness and to ennoble life. Coming back to Europe after a sojourn of many years under these Asiatic influences, one cannot fail to be struck by the looseness of the religious structure and by the constant efforts made by the State, the Church, and sometimes also by society to strengthen and keep upright the frail, shaky building tottering on its foundation. In Asia this is not necessary. With the exception of the Motazilites and other freethinkers during the first centuries of the Hejira, scepticism and free thought have found no adherents in Islam, and in modern times less than ever. The great masses of the Mohammedans are strictly religious; all discussion in matters of religion is prohibited, except perhaps to the Shiite Mollahs, and highly edifying to me were the hours spent in Ispahan under the plane-

trees in the garden of Medreşsei Shah, where I could converse freely and openly with the Persian clerics about the Divine tradition of the Koran, the immortality of the soul, &c., &c. With Moslems of other nationalities the principle *noli me tangere* governs all matters of religion, and when we leave this stronghold of faith and come to Europe, where the struggle between faith and knowledge has been going on for hundreds of years, where Spinoza, Voltaire, Gibbon, Draper, Buckle, and many other modern thinkers have been successfully employed on the demolition of the religious structure; where attempts are made to supplant the worship of God with the worship of humanity; the hypocrisy and dissimulation prevailing in our world must strike us painfully. What Christianity and Judaism give us to behold passes all description. In spite of Strauss and Renan, Büchner and Huxley, millions of Westerners pretend to be either Christians or Jews without even believing that there is a God. The majority of Churchmen are so enlightened by modern science that they, least of all, believe in the doctrines they preach and fight for, and the traveller from Asia to Europe must, perforce, ask himself the question, "Why all this hypocrisy, all this dissimulation? Why this persistent closing of one's eyes against the rays of light which our culture, after a hard struggle with the prevailing darkness, has at last revealed?" This incomprehensible love of pretence has in Europe attained

to such a pass that in certain leading circles hypocrisy, the religious lie and false pretence are held up as a virtue worthy of imitation, and a meritorious example! This perversity, this vice, I might say, is as incomprehensible to the thoughtful mind as it is unworthy of, and humiliating amid, the much vaunted achievements of Western civilisation. In the circles where these despicable notions are tolerated and extolled as worthy of imitation we hear most of the mighty influence exercised by religion upon the social status of humanity, while it is asserted that the world without this moral police could not exist, because society, even in its lowest state—the savage state—could not exist without its fetish and totem.

During my many years' intercourse with people of various religions, living amongst them in the incognito of Catholic, Protestant, Sunnite, Shiite, and for a short time also as Parsi, I have come to the conclusion that religion offers but little security against moral deterioration, and that it is not seemly for the spirit of the twentieth century to take example by the customs and doings of savages. Not only Lombroso, but many other thinkers, have clearly proved that the majority of criminals are religiously disposed, and that, for instance, the robber-murderer in Spain, before setting to his work, offers a prayer to his patron saint, St. James. In Asia I have noticed the same thing. The most cruel and unprincipled Turkoman robbers were

always the first, before setting out on a marauding expedition, to beg from me, the supposed Sheikh, or from some other pious man, a Fatiha (blessing). In the towns of Central Asia, Persia, and Turkey I have found in the thickly-turbaned men of God some of the most consummate villains and criminals, while the plain Osbeg and Osmanli, who only knows religion in its external form, shows himself a man full of generosity and goodness of heart. In all the Islamic world Mecca and Medina are known as the most loathsome pools of wickedness and vice. Theft, murder, and prostitution flourish there most wantonly. I have noticed the same in the large pilgrim haunts, Meshed and Kum, and it is a well-known saying, "He who wants to forsake his Christianity should make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem or Rome."

With us in Europe the relation between morality and religion is a similar one, and how it is possible that, in the face of the revealed facts, states and societies give themselves the trouble to discover in religion a panacea against vice and a standard of morality must remain a mystery to any thinking man.

Remarkable and inexplicable it certainly remains why in Western lands, with the prevailing scepticism in the cultured world, far more tolerance or indifference is shown towards the freethinker than towards people who hold different religious views from our own. In Asia the hatred of and

fanaticism against those of another creed are the outcome of strong faith, and since these are fostered and upheld by the Government, antagonistic feelings, though probably deeper rooted, do not express themselves so vehemently or so frequently as with us. Our laws and our notions of decency guard against the outbreak of passion, but they cannot break the power of prejudice even in the breast of the most cultured. When we consider the relations of the Christian West towards the Moslemic East, it will strike us that the sympathies of Europeans, however unprejudiced they may think themselves, when it comes to the political questions of the day will always be more on the side of the Christian than of the Mohammedan subjects of Turkey, although the Mohammedan subjects of the Porte have to suffer more from the despotism of the Government than the Christians under the protection of the Western Powers. The European still looks upon the Mohammedan, Brahmanist, Buddhist, &c., as an inferior being whose faith he ridicules and blackens and whom he could not under any circumstances regard as his equal, and in spite of the protection extended by our laws to those of another creed, the follower of the doctrines of Mohammed, Buddha, and Vishnu feels always uncomfortable, strange, and restricted in Western lands. And the Jews do not fare much better, although they have adopted the language, manners, and customs of the various lands of Europe.

In the history of the Moslemic East, for instance, persecutions and violent outbreaks against the Jews are far less frequent than with us in the West, not merely in the Middle Ages but even in quite modern times. Enlightened Europe, mocking at the fanaticism of Asia, has of late years published, under the title of Anti-Semitism, things against the Jews which defy repetition ; they form one of the darkest stains on the escutcheon of the modern world of culture. Even our most eminent freethinkers, agnostics, and atheists are not without blame in this matter ; and the absurd excuse that the Jews are hated and persecuted not on account of their belief, but on account of their exclusiveness and strongly marked nationality, is ridiculous on the face of it, for all over Europe the Jew adopts the national proclivities of his native land, and often, *plus catholique que le pape*, he shows himself more patriotic than his Christian countryman. In consideration of these facts it is surprising that the Jew, treated as a stranger everywhere in Europe, still persists in ingratiating himself into the national bond. Why does he not accept the fact and simply say, "Since you want none of me I remain Jew, and you can brand me as a cosmopolitan if you like." There is no doubt that this innate prejudice of the Christian world finds its root in those virtues and characteristics which have enabled the Jews to accomplish so much, and which as the natural result of oppression may be seen in all oppressed people. "He who violently

throws down the flaming torch to extinguish it will burn his fingers at the fiercer burning flame," as a German poet pithily remarks. Tyrants generally harm themselves most by their tyranny, and when the ruling Christian world considers itself justified in taking up arms against the professedly more highly gifted, more energetic, and persevering children of the so-called Semitic race, it is grossly mistaken. The Jew in Turkey, Persia, and Central Asia is more purely Semitic, more staunchly religious than his co-religionist in Europe, and yet I do not know any more miserable, helpless, and pitiful individual on God's earth than the *Jahudi* in those countries. Where is the Semitic sharpness, the Semitic energy and perseverance, which the European puts down and fears as dangerous racial characteristics? The poor Jew is despised, belaboured and tortured alike by Moslem, Christian, and Brahmin, he is the poorest of the poor, and outstripped by Armenians, Greeks and Brahmins, who everywhere act the same part which in Europe has fallen to the lot of the Jew for lack of a rival in adversity. I repeat Anti-Semitism in Europe is a vile baseness, which cannot be justified by any religious, ethnical, or social motives, and when the Occident, boasting of its humaneness and love of justice, always tries to put all that is evil and despicable on to poor, starved, depraved Asia, one forgets that with us the sun of a higher civilisation truly has dawned, but is not yet risen high enough

to illumine the many dark points and gloomy corners in this world of ours.

Why deny it? In my many years' intercourse with the people of both these worlds, religion has not had a beneficial influence upon me. I have found in it nothing to ennoble man, not a mainspring of lofty ideals, and certainly no grounds for classifying and incorporating people according to their profession of faith or rather according to their interpretation and understanding of the great vital question as to the exact manner in which one should grope about in the prevailing darkness. If the division into many nationalities of people belonging to the same race and living under the same sky is an absurdity, how much more foolish is it to be divided on the point of a fanciful interpretation of the inscrutable mystery, and a fruitless groping into the unfathomable problem? The question of nationality will be further discussed presently, and as regards religion I will only add here that the ethical standard of faith, although much higher in Asia than in Europe, can after all have but a problematic influence, and only on intellects whose culture enables them to form high ideals, and to whom, being of a poetic or sentimental or indolent temperament, a roaming in loftier spheres seems a necessity. Beyond this, religion in Asia as in Europe reveals itself in outward show, miracles and mysteries, and where these are absent there is no true religion. Many of the ceremonies, usages,

and superstitions which as an Orthodox Jew I practised in my youth I have discovered again one by one in faithful counterfeit amongst Catholic and Orthodox Christians, Moslems, Fire-worshippers, and Hindus, and nothing to my mind is more ridiculous than the revilings of one religion against another about these childish external things. So, for instance, as a pious Jew, I was always careful on Saturdays not to pass the Ereb, *i.e.*, the line which marks the closer limit of the town, with my wallet full. Overstepping this cordon might be looked upon as a business transaction and a violation of the Sabbath; with a handkerchief on my loins and my eyes fixed on a bit of twine hanging between two sticks, I ventured, however, to take my walks abroad on the Sabbath day. Many years later I travelled from Samarkand to Herat in company with some Hindustani, who, having transacted some financial business in Bokhara, now with full pouches were returning to their sunny home on the Ganges. These Vishnu-worshippers, with the yellow caste-sign on their brow, used at night at the halting-place to separate themselves from the rest of the caravan. Small sticks about a finger in length were stuck in the ground to form a circle round them with a thin twine stretched from point to point, (for, like the Ereb, this line represented the cordon between them and the world of unbelievers), and behind this imaginary wall they prepared and ate their food without any fear of

its being defiled by the glances of the heathen. As a child I was taught to look with disgust upon swine's flesh, and later, as Mohammedan, I had to feign horror and aversion at the very mention of the word Khinzir (swine). In my youth the wine prepared by a Christian was Nesekh (forbidden), as a Shiite, notwithstanding my ravenous hunger, I could not touch the food which the hand of a Christian had handled. Not only among Jews and Asiatic religionists, however, but even Christianity, whether in Europe or in Asia, is full of such flagrant superstitions and absurdities which are thrown in the teeth of those of another persuasion. The Abbé Huc tells us in his Book of Travels, that once on the borders of Tibet he sought a night's quarter and was directed to the house of a Buddha-maker. This led the French missionary to make some scoffing remark about the manufacturing of gods in Buddhism. I had a similar experience at St. Ulrich's in the Grödnerthal, in strictly Catholic Tyrol, for in my search for a house to put up at in that charmingly situated Alpine place I was directed successively to a Mary-maker, a God-maker, and a Christ-maker, for in this district live the best-known manufacturers of crosses and saints. In the Mohammedan world, knowing that I was acquainted with Europe, I have often been asked whether it was really true that the Franks worshipped a god with a dog's head, practised communism of wives, and such like things. In Tyrol,

on the Achensee, where I lived among the peasants, I was asked if on my many travels I had ever visited the land of the Liberals, where the goat does duty as god, as the anti-Liberal minister had given the simple peasants to understand.

In many other respects the religions of the East and of the West agree in point of degeneracy, and it is incomprehensible how and with what right our missionaries manage to convince the Asiatics of the errors of their faith and to represent Christianity as the only pure and salvation-bringing religion. If our missionaries could point to our Western order and freedom as the fruit of Christianity, their insistence would be somewhat justified, but our modern culture has developed not *through* but *in spite of* Christianity. The fact that Asia in our days is given up as a prey to the rapacity of Europe is not the fault of Islam or Buddhism or Brahminism. The principles of these religions support more than Christianity does the laws of humanity and freedom, the regulations of State and society, but it is the historical development and the climate, the conditions of the soil, and, above all, the tyrannical aribitrariness of their sovereigns which have created the cliffs against which all the efforts of religion promotors must be wrecked.

After all this I need not comment any further upon my own confession of faith, which is contained within the pages of this autobiography. To my thoroughly practical nature one grain of common

sense is of more value than a bushel of theories; and it has always been trying to me to go into questions the solution of which I hold *à priori* to be impossible, and I have preferably occupied myself with matters of common interest rather than with the problems of creation, the Deity, &c., which our human understanding can never grasp or fathom. I have honoured and respected all religions in so far as they were beneficial and edifying, *i.e.*, in so far as they endeavoured to improve and ennoble mankind; and when occasion demanded I have always, either out of respect for the laws of the land, or out of courtesy to the society in which I happened to be, formally conformed to the prevailing religion of the land, just as I did in the matter of dress, although it might be irksome at times. In matters of secondary importance, religious and otherwise, I have strictly adhered to the principle, "*Si fueris Romæ romano vivito more*," and to the objections raised by religious moralists to my vacillating in matters of religion I can but reply: A vacillating conviction is, generally speaking, no conviction at all, and he who possesses nothing has nothing to exchange. Nothing to me is more disgusting than the holy wrath with which hypocrisy in Europe censures and condemns a change of religion based on want of conviction. Are the clergy, pastors, and modernised rabbis so fully convinced of the soundness of the dogmas they hold, and do they really believe that their distor-

tions of face, their pious pathos and false enthusiasm can deceive cultured people of the twentieth century? When certain Europeans in their antiquated conservatism still carry high the banner of religious hypocrisy, and although possessing a good pair of legs prefer to go about on the crutches of Holy Scripture, we have no occasion to envy them their choice. The idea of carrying the lie with me to the grave seems to me horrible. The intellectual acquisitions of our century can no longer away with the religion of obscure antiquity; knowledge, enlightenment, and free inquiry have made little Europe mistress of the world, and I cannot see what advantage there can be in wilfully denying this fact, and why, in the education of the young, we do not discard the stupefying system of religious doctrine and cultivate the clear light of intellectual culture. Those who have lived among many phases of religion, and have been on intimate terms with the adherents of Asiatic and European creeds, are puzzled to see the faintheartedness and indecision of the Western world; and if there be anything that has astonished me in Europe, it is this everlasting groping and fumbling about in matters of religion and the constant dread lest the truth, acknowledged by all thinking men, should gain the victory. For governing and ruling the masses religion may perhaps remain for some time to come a convenient and useful instrument, but in the face of the progress in all regions of modern knowledge and thought it becomes ever clearer and

more evident that this game of hide-and-seek cannot go on very much longer. The spirit of the twentieth century cries, "Let there be light!" The light must and shall come!

2. Nationality.

Frail and brittle as is the foundation of the partition wall dividing the religions of Europe, the same may be said of the boundaries of nationalities which separate people into various corporations. If nationality were a question of common origin, based on consanguinity, *i.e.*, on natural proclivities, there would be nothing to say against the idea of unity and cohesiveness. Mankind would be divided into different families separated by certain conspicuous racial characteristics; such separation, based on natural causes, would be quite justifiable. But in the various nationalities, as we now see them in Europe, there is not a symptom of any such idea; their ethnical origin lies in obscurity. These nations are an agglomeration of the greatest possible mixture of kindred and foreign elements, and, according to the longer or shorter process of development, it is at most their common language, customs, and history which constitute the so-called national stamp. If we observe a little more closely the European nations of our time we shall find that the older the influence of culture the sooner the national crystallisation of such a country began, and consequently is still in process in the later-

developed Eastern portion of Europe. The French are a mixture of Iberians, Ligurians or Gauls, Kelts, and eventually also Phœnicians, and the German Franks, who found this ethnical conglomeration in ancient Gaul and gave it the present national name. In the German national corporation there are many nationalities whose German origin is by no means proved. A large portion of Eastern Germany was Slavonic; Berlin, Leipsic, Dresden, Chemnitz, &c., point to a Slavonic origin, and the oldest inhabitants of Steiermark, Kärnten, and the Eastern Tyrol were Slavs. In Italy we find a most curious mixture of Etruscans, Latins, Greeks, Slavs, Arabs, and Germans, which in course of time Church and State have amalgamated and impressed with the stamp of linguistic unity, although the typical features of the various fragments are not obliterated even now. In Hungary Ural-Altaic fragments have mixed with Slavs and other Aryans, and in spite of numerical minority the Magyar element, through its warlike propensities, has for centuries maintained the upper hand and gradually absorbed the foreign elements. The real ground-element of the Magyar nation, however, it would be almost impossible to discover.

The strongly mixed character of the English people is universally known, and when we look a little more closely at the gigantic Russian Empire we shall find that in the small nucleus of the Slavonic provinces, Tartars, Bashkirs, Kirghiz,

Buriats, Votiaks, Cheremiss, Suryanes, Shuvashes, Greeks, Ostiaks, Voguls, Caucasians, &c., have been swallowed up. The growth of the Russian nation is of comparatively modern date and still in process. At the time of Peter the Great the entire population of Russia was estimated at thirty millions; *now* the number of Russians alone is over eighty millions.

And now I ask, in the face of all the above difficulties, can there be a question of consanguinity in the various nationalities, and what is there to insure a feeling of brotherly fellowship? Those who argue in favour of this point bring forward the national peculiarities, the outcome of their common language, customs, and historical antecedents, all of them psychical causes, and nationality is represented as a moral and not as a material conception. Very well, we will accept this, only let us remember that language, like all other psychical things, is subject to changes, and we must not be astonished if Islam, ignoring all former national restrictions, seeks to classify the human race only according to profession of faith, and has advanced the thesis, "All true believers are brothers." In the Mohammedan organisation the various shades of nationality practically do not exist, in obedience to the maxim: "*Hubb ul watan min el iman.*" Patriotism proceeds from religion; at any rate they are always of secondary importance. When Islam, inspired by such lofty ideas,

can accomplish this, why cannot we, under the powerful protection of our modern culture, produce some equivalent in our Western lands, and, putting aside national restrictions, create a cultural bond and united corporation, excluding all national hatred and discord? This indeed would be one of the most ideal forms of national life, and its realisation in the distant future is not at all an impossibility. But as yet, alas! we have not reached this exalted station of peace and happiness. Behold in our cultured West the uninterrupted struggle of great and mighty nationalities against smaller and weaker ones—a struggle in which Darwin's theory of the "survival of the fittest" is fully justified. No one likes to act the part of the weaker, doomed to destruction; none wants to be absorbed by others, and the inferior in numbers have to defend their claim for existence as a political nation upon historical grounds. It is the rapacity and the tyranny of the great nations which have called forth and justify the fight for existence in the smaller ones, for why should not all want to preserve their individuality, all want to be entirely free in promoting the intellectual and material development of their own commonwealth? And this being so, there can, for the present, be no question of cosmopolitan tendencies. This fact becomes more conspicuous where it concerns a small ethnical island surrounded by the wild waves of a mighty ethnical sea, which threaten to destroy it, as we see

exemplified in Hungary. Encompassed by German, Slav, and Roman elements, it has for centuries skilfully and successfully held its own, and the preservation of its national independence is an absolute necessity, as otherwise a collision between the three large national bodies just mentioned would be unavoidable, and the existence of a buffer-state must therefore be hailed as a fortunate coincidence. All lovers of peace and of quiet expansion of Western culture in the East must hail with joy the buffer afforded by the Hungarian State, and all true friends of culture must heartily desire the growth of Hungary. In this spirit I have always preserved my Hungarian patriotism, and will do so to the end of my days, although for many decades of years I have occupied myself with questions of universal interest, and have kept aloof from home politics. It is not surprising that the patriotism of a cosmopolitan differs considerably from that of his stay-at-home compatriots. But the keen interest in the affairs of the various nations with whom the traveller comes into contact hardly ever succeeds in suppressing or weakening in him his warmer feelings for the weal and woe of his native land. The tears I have shed in my younger days over the cruel sufferings and mortifications inflicted upon my native land by Austria's absolutism would have promoted a more luxurious growth of the plant of patriotism, if I had always remained at home and had had intercourse with Hungarians

only. But even when one's horizon has widened one may still cling lovingly to one's native sod. One does not so lightly agree with Tolstoy, who maintains that patriotism is a crime, for although there are proverbs such as "*Ubi bene ibi patria*," or its English equivalent, "If you happen to be born in a stable, it does not follow that you are a horse," the cosmopolitan, be he ever so infatuated, always in the end is glad to get home again.

If there be anything likely to weaken or shake one's patriotism, it is the narrow-mindedness and ridiculous prejudice of the Christian West against its fellow-countrymen of a different creed. I will take my own case as example. I was all ablaze with enthusiasm when in my childhood I became acquainted with the life of the national heroes of Hungary. The heroic epoch of 1848 filled my youthful heart with genuine pride, and even later in 1861, when I returned from Constantinople by the Danube boat, on landing at Mohacs I fell on my knees and kissed the ground with tears of true patriotic devotion in my eyes. I was intensely happy and in a rapture of delight, but had soon to realise that many, nay most people questioned the genuineness of my Hungarianism. They criticised and made fun of me, because, they said, people of Jewish origin cannot be Hungarians, they can only be Jews and nothing else. I pointed to the circumstance that in matters of faith, like most cultured people, I was really an agnostic and had long since left the precincts of Judaism.

I spoke of the dangers I had faced in order to investigate the early history of Hungary, surely a test of patriotism such as but few would be able to show. Many other arguments I brought forward, but all in vain ; everywhere and on all occasions an ominous sneer, an insidious shrug of the shoulders, an icy indifference, or a silence which has a more deadly effect than any amount of talk. Add to this the deep and painful wound inflicted by the adverse criticism at home upon me and my travels, and I would ask the reader, Could I under these conditions persist in my national enthusiasm, could I stand up to defend Hungarian patriotism with the same ardent love of youth when as yet I had no anticipation of what was to happen to me? Even the most furious nationalist could not easily answer this question in the affirmative. Not his Jewish descent, but the prejudiced, unreasonable, and illiberal Christian world is to blame when the man of Jewish origin becomes cosmopolitan; and I am not sure whether those Jews who, in spite of the blunt refusals they receive, persist in pushing themselves within the national framework must be admired as martyrs or despised as intruders. The law, at all events, makes no difference, but usage and social convenience do not trouble themselves much about the law ; and in this all European countries are alike, with the exception of England, where liberalism is not an empty term, where the Jew feels thoroughly English and is looked upon as

such by the true Briton. I frankly admit that the weakening and ultimate loss of this warm national feeling deprives us of one of the most noble sentiments of humanity; for, with all its weakness and prejudices, the bond of national unity possesses always a certain charm and attraction; and through all the painful experiences of my life, the thought that the short-sightedness of society could not deprive me of my national right to the soil of my birth has comforted and cheered me. The land where I saw the light of day, where my cradle stood, and where I spent the golden days of childhood, is, and ever remains my Fatherland. It is my native soil, its weal and woe lie close to my heart, and I have always been delighted when in some way or other I could help a Hungarian.

3. Society.

If my ideas about religion and nationality are at variance with the prevailing notions in Western lands, this is still more the case with regard to our social standing. The European who has been in Asia for some length of time feels freer and less restricted there than in Europe, in spite of the anarchy, barbarism, and tyranny prevailing in the East. In the first place, as stranger and guest he has less to suffer from the despotism of the Government and the oppressive national customs. He stands under the protection of the dreaded West and is not subject to the laws of the land. He lives

as an outlaw truly, and has to look after himself, but then he has the advantage of not being bound by any party spirit; no class prejudice exists here. In the East the highest in the land has to condescend to his inferiors, even princes are not exempt from this law, which is in accordance with the patriarchal spirit of the Government. I have witnessed simple peasants rebuking their landlord, without the latter daring to say a word of protest. With us in Europe the tax-paid official behaves not as the servant but the master of the public, and his arrogance is often very offensive. But still more objectionable is the conduct of the uneducated born aristocrats, who, on the strength of the problematic services of their forefathers, often without the least personal merit, exhibit an amount of pride as if the course of the universe depended upon them. I have never quite been able to understand why the born aristocrat should claim this exceptional position, which nowadays is not so much a matter of national law as of public opinion. If these privileges are a recognition and reward for services rendered, and to be continued from generation to generation, the harm done to society is incalculable, for the offspring only very seldom possess the intellectual heirloom of their ancestors, very seldom come up to the position they occupy, and moreover stand in the way of those better fitted to fill it. Of course in opposition to these views the succession theory is advanced, and in my dis-

cussions on this point I have often been met with the argument that as in the vegetable and animal kingdom there are superior species, this natural law also applies to the human race. The maxim, "*Fortes creatur fortibus*," is quoted, but one forgets that human strength, thanks to the advanced spirit of the age, consists now no longer in physical but in psychical qualities, and that greatness and perfection of intellectual power can be obtained only by study, zeal, and persevering intellectual labour—not exactly a favourite pastime of the born aristocrat, generally speaking. *Vir non nascitur sed fit*, says the old proverb; and although admitting advantages of birth in horses, dogs and other quadrupeds, we cannot do the same for the human race of the twentieth century.

What has been accomplished so far in literature, art, science and intellectual advancement generally is for the greater part the work of people not favoured by birth, but who in the hard struggle for existence have steeled their nerves and sharpened their wits. In the dark ages of crude thought, when the greatest amount of hereditary physical strength displayed in plundering, murdering and pillaging bore away the palm, there was some sense in hereditary aristocracy, but in modern times privileges of birth are nonsense, and where they do exist they are a disgrace to humanity, and a melancholy sign of the tardiness of society in certain countries. Curiously enough, even in our

days people try to justify the existence of hereditary nobility by referring to the historical development of certain States. For instance, the decay and retrogression of Asiatic nations is attributed to the lack of an hereditary aristocracy, and Japan is quoted as an example of the mighty influence of inherited nobility. But the example is not to the point. The fact that Japan, in spite of the great natural endowments of its people, was up to the middle of the nineteenth century closed against all influences from the West, is due solely and entirely to the strictly feudal system of the land; and any one studying the struggle between the Daimos and Mikado-ism will perceive that in this Albion of the Far East modern civilisation and the elevation of the State have been introduced against the will and in spite of the nobility. If pedigreed nobility is really so essential to the well-being of a State, how can we account for the lamentable decay of Persia, where there has always been such a strongly pronounced aristocracy?

Holding such views it is only natural that I could never quite fit into the frame of Hungarian society, where aristocractic predilections predominate. In the springtime of 1848 the Hungarian Parliament, infected by the prevailing spirit of the age, did indeed abolish the rights of hereditary nobility, and, as was supposed, quite voluntarily. But as the middle class element has always been feebly represented in Hungary, and consequently public opinion

never could exercise much persuasive force, this law is little more than a show-piece, and has never been really effective. As in the Middle Ages the tone-giving elements were looked upon as the real representatives of the Hungarian race in the motley chaos of nationalities, and therefore *ipso facto* belonged to the nobility, so it is now the social tendency of the country to look upon genuine Hungarian descent as an undeniable sign of nobility, and since the Government takes no measures to put a stop to the mischief—in fact, is not particularly chary in the grant of letters of nobility—every one who possibly can do so tries to prove his genuine unadulterated Hungarian descent by procuring a letter of nobility. This tendency, far from being a healthy sign, reminds one forcibly of a return to mediæval ways; it nips in the bud all notions of freedom; it cannot be to the benefit of our beautiful land and our gifted nation; it cannot help forward its healthy development, that much at least is clear as the day. Just as in the natural law a body cannot find a solid basis on a pointed but only on a flat surface, so also the peace, safety, and well-being of a State can not be securely founded on the heads of society but on the broad basis of the people. The present tendency of Hungarian society is, therefore, not at all to my liking. However, as autobiographer, I will not enter into any social-political discussions, but I cannot help saying that I, the self-made man,

could not possibly live in close communion with such a society. He who has fought the hard fight and, *per aspera ad astra*, has endeavoured to succeed, does not find satisfaction for his ambition in a closer union with a caste which has long since lost its original significance. *Altiora peto!* And this worthier and higher recognition we are all entitled to claim, when we are conscious of having rendered ever so slight a service to our fellowmen and have contributed ever so little to the intellectual or material well-being of our country or of humanity in general. The chase after orders and decorations, the natural outcome of this aristocratic tendency, although quite the fashion not only in Hungary but in other countries of Europe as well, has never been my ambition either. If sovereigns were pleased to confer such distinctions upon me I have respectfully locked them up in my box, because a public refusal of them seemed to me making a useless parade of democracy, and because no one is entitled to respond to a courtesy with rudeness. I have never been able to understand how certain men, grown old in wisdom and experience, can find pleasure in bedizening themselves from head to toe with decorations and parading their titles. One calls it apologetically, "The vanity of scholars." But the learned should not commit themselves to such childish, ridiculous weakness. Official distinctions are very much like a command on the part of the State, "Honour this man!" which is quite super-

fluous, for he who is really worthy of honour will be honoured without any such authoritative command. But enough of this ; all these and many other social peculiarities both at home and abroad have never had any attraction for me. To respect a man according to the length of his pedigree, or to honour him according to the superiority of his official dignity, is a thing beyond the capacity of the self-made man. Only the prerogatives of mind and heart command respect, they only are genuine, for they are not dependent on the whim or favour of others, but are based on character or honest labour.

It should also be noted that in Hungary society is far more absorbed in politics than is generally the case, and that science and intellectual labour of any kind are of secondary importance. From the point of view of utility my countrymen are perfectly right, for Hungary, in spite of its glorious past as an independent State, has a hard battle to fight with its neighbour, Austria ; and since it is necessary for a nation to establish itself politically before it can take part in the labour of improving mankind at large, it is very natural that the mind of the nation should be set on political matters, and politics be looked upon as an eminently national question. But apart from this I could never get on with my literary studies at home because my favourite subject, the practical knowledge of the East, never excited much interest in Hungary. What does Hungary care about the

rivalry between England and Russia in Central Asia, and what possible benefit can it derive from the literary, historical, and ethnographical details of inner Asiatic nations? Whatever my labours have yielded of interest in regard to the primitive history of Hungary, I have given to the public; but as the greater part of my literary activity was the result of my practical knowledge of Asia, the products of my pen have received far more notice outside of Hungary than at home. I have often been asked why as Hungarian by birth I did not confine myself exclusively to Hungarian topics, and why I entered the region of international literature? At home also I have often been blamed for this, but my critics seemed to forget that my preparatory and my later studies were international in themselves, and that with the best will in the world I could not have confined myself to purely national interests. And so it came about that mentally I remained a stranger in my native land, and in the isolation of the subject of my studies I lived for years confined to my own society, without any intellectual intercourse, without any interchange of ideas, without recognition! It was not an enviable position. I was a stranger in the place where I had passed my youth; a stranger in Turkey, Persia and Central Asia; as a stranger I made my *début* in England, and a stranger I remained in my own home; and all this because a singular fate and certain natural propensities forced me to follow a career which, because

of its uncommonness, put me into an exceptional position. Had I persevered in the stereotyped paths of Orientalism, *i.e.*, had I been able to give my mind exclusively to the ferreting out of grammatical niceties, and to inquiring into the speculations of theoretical explorers, I could have grown my Oriental cabbages in peace in the quiet rut of my professional predecessors. But how can one expect that a man who as Dervish, without a farthing in his pocket, has cut his way through the whole of the Islam world, who on the strength of his eminently practical nature has accommodated himself to so many different situations, and at last has been forced by circumstances to take a sober, matter-of-fact view of life—how can one expect such a man to bury himself in theoretical ideas, and to give himself up to idealistic speculations? A bookworm I could never be! When I was young, and fancy carried me away into higher spheres, I could derive a certain amount of pleasure from abstract questions, but in after years, when the bitter gravity of life forced me to take a realistic view of things, I preferably chose that region of literature where not merely laurels, but also tangible fruits, were to be found. I took into consideration that in the face of the expected opening up of Asia, and the animated interest of our world in the occurrences of the East, the discussion of the practical questions of the day would be more to the purpose, more likely to attract attention, and to be appreciated by the

world at large than the theoretical investigation of past events, however significant in themselves. This is the reason why at an early date, without giving up my linguistic studies, I devoted myself to Asiatic politics.

Orthodox and narrow-minded philologists may object to this divergence from the trodden path, but I say, "*Chacun à son gout*," and every man has a perfect right to exert himself in the direction best suited to his tastes and his necessities. To me it was of the greatest moment not only to gain experience and fame, but above all, independence. I have never quite understood why the desire to become independent through the acquisition of earthly goods should be so objectionable in a scholar, for surely independence is the first requirement of human existence.

Strictly adhering to the principle, "*Nulla dies sine linea*," my pen has in the end procured me the material means for loosening the bonds in which the poor writer had languished for so many years. Sixty years had to pass over my head before I could declare, "Now at last I am free from all material care, henceforth no Government, no princely favour, no human whim, can check my thoughts." For the pursuit after filthy lucre, however humiliating and despicable it may appear, is, and ever has been, a cruel necessity, indispensable to the attainment of even the loftiest, noblest ideals. I cannot explain how or why, but in my inmost mind, in every fibre

of my nature, I have always been a passionate, fanatical supporter of independent ideas. An English writer, Sidney Whitman, says that this passion is an outcome of my Jewish origin, because the Jews have always been conspicuous for their notions of independence. Possibly; but I attribute it in my case rather to the oppression, the ignominy, the insults to which I was exposed in my youth. Nor did I fare much better in after years. Everywhere and always I have had much to suffer from poverty, social prejudice, and the tyranny of Governments; and when at last, having overcome all, I attained to intellectual and material independence, I felt supremely happy in the enjoyment of my dearly bought liberty, and in this enjoyment found the only worthy reward for the hard struggle of my life. I have made no concealment of my views as to the prejudices, the weaknesses, the obscurantism, and the ignorance of society, and I did not care when on account of my views about religion, nationality, aristocracy, &c., so contrary to the generally conceived notions, I was looked upon as eccentric, extravagant, sometimes even as not quite in my right mind. I held, and ever will hold, to my principles, purified in the hard struggle for existence. And if the struggle for my material wants is at an end the mental struggle goes on always, and will probably continue to the last breath of my life.

"The Struggle's End, and yet no End." Thus I

have entitled this last portion of my autobiography. And I am not sorry that it should be so, for what would life be worth without struggle, especially for those who from their earliest youth to their old age have trodden the rough paths of life, and been accustomed to fight hard for the smallest ray of sunshine on their work. Yet after all I must honestly confess that there is more pleasure in the actual strain and effort than in the final accomplishment. Amid the pangs of hunger and all the sad circumstances of my adventurous life, work has been my only comfort, hope, and solace ; it always came to my rescue, and I owe to it all that I have accomplished in this world. In this full assurance I have gladly sacrificed all pleasures, both private and social, for the sake of work. In spite of my joviality I was never a society man—I mean, cared for drawing-room life or for the social evenings of scholars and writers—because I found that in the former mostly frivolous, useless matters were discussed, and in the latter with much instructive and intellectual conversation, spirituous drinks—which I have always abominated—play an important part. Only very rarely have I visited the theatre, for when I was young I should have liked to go, but had not the means, and as I advanced in years the theatre lost its attraction for me, and being an early riser, I made it a rule to go to bed at nine o'clock. Generally speaking, I kept the question of utility in the foreground, and if a thing did not commend

itself as particularly profitable or beneficial, I left it alone. In this manner and with these views of life I have finished a somewhat fantastic career. I have often been asked whether from the very first I worked with some particular purpose in view whether the certain hope of success bore me along, or whether I was surprised at the final result. To those really interested in my destiny I reply as follows: At first naturally the instinct of self-preservation urged me on, for with an empty stomach one may be able to indulge in dreams, but one cannot work. The world's literatures, read in their respective languages, were a great delight to me, but with an empty stomach and teeth chattering with cold the desire for intellectual food is soon subdued by a longing for physical nourishment and a warm corner. In course of time all this was changed. As I was able to satisfy my material wants, in that same measure the desire for knowledge increased, and ambition grew with it. To outstrip my fellow-labourers with a higher degree of knowledge, to make myself prominent by certain intellectual qualities, to pose as an authority, and by some special accomplishment to excite the admiration and the applause of the public—all this led me into the devil's clutches. For years I wildly pursued this course with feverish restlessness, and during this time fell my incognito life in Stambul, my dangerous journey to Samarkand, and my *début* in England and the rest of Europe.

One may well say, "Surely such varied and unexpected results made you pause for a moment, surely you stopped to reflect and to ask yourself the question, 'What will all this lead to?'" No, I never stopped to think. One by one the different phases of my almost romantic career were left behind; the poor Jew boy became a European celebrity; but I cared not. Forward, ever forward, for ambition is insatiable; it leaves one no time for reflection, nor is retrospection one of its favourite pastimes; it is not the past, but the future, which occupies all our thoughts. With such ideas in my mind, my sojourn on the shores of the beautiful Danube was of necessity only in appearance a *buen retiro*, but certainly no *otium cum dignitate*. Apart from my studies, which occupied several hours a day, my active pen, often against my will, brought me in contact with the most distant regions of the globe. I kept up a lively correspondence with people of various rank and degree in Turkey, Persia, Central Asia, India, China, Japan, America, and Australia; and were I to mention the different occasions which called forth this interchange of letters, it would give a true and amusing picture of the joys and the sufferings of a literary worker. Sometimes it was a Japanese politician who urged me on to have a dig at Russia, pointing out the common danger which threatened both Hungary and Japan if Russia's power were allowed free growth. Then, again, a malcontent Hindustani

blamed me for having taken the British tyrant under my wing ; while another Hindustani praised me for duly acknowledging the spirit of liberty and justice which animated the Raj, *i.e.*, the English Government. A Persian who has read in the diary of his sovereign about my personal relations with the king, asks me for my recommendation and protection, and while one Turk showers praise upon me for my Turcophile writings, another Turk insults me for having accepted the hospitality of the hated Sultan Abdul Hamid. A Tartar from Yalta, who addresses me as the opponent of Russia and the student of Moslem dithyrambs, begs for a copy of my *Sheibaniade*, as he has not the means to buy one. So it goes on day after day, but worst of all the poor international writer fares at the hands of the Americans. The number of autograph collectors is astonishing, and many are kind enough to enclose an American stamp or a few cents for the reply postage. And then the questions I am asked! Could I inform them of the hour of my birth, in order to account for my adventurous career? And I do not even know what year I was born! An American surgeon asks me to send him a photograph of my tongue, that from its formation he may draw his conclusions as to my linguistic talent, and so on, and so on. As most of these letters have to be answered, one may readily imagine the amount of time and patience this often awkward correspondence absorbs, and it is more in

after life that this side of international authorship becomes such a nuisance.

This reverse side of the medal one has to put up with, however; it supplies some bright interludes also. Questions referring to my motley career require more careful consideration. Many of my friends and acquaintances have been curious to know how I bore the enormous difference between my present position and the naked misery of my childhood, and whether, generally speaking, I often thought of all my past sufferings and struggles. Well, to tell the truth, the recollections of the past form the sweetest moments of my life. It is quite like a novel when I think of the beginning of my career and then look at the end, but as the transformation has been a gradual and slow progress, and as I have never doubted the intimate connection between labour and wages, the steady progress from worse to better has but seemed natural to me, and the really wonderful part in it was the disposition of a kind destiny. "*Labor omnia vincit*" has always been my device, not forgetting the other saying, "*Sors bona, nihil aliud*"; for that on my journey through the Steppes I did not die of thirst, that I was able to undergo the fatigues of those long marches on foot through the deep sand with lame legs, and that I escaped the executioner's axe of the tyrants of Khiva and Bokhara, I attribute solely to my lucky star. Without this star all my perseverance, patience, ambition, linguistic talent,

and intellectual activity would have been fruitless. But as concerns the recollection of those past sufferings and struggles I must honestly say that a retrospective glance has always given me the greatest pleasure; the more so where, as in my case, I have both mentally and physically an unbroken view of my past career. In spite of the seventy years which have gone over my head, I feel physically perfectly composed and in good health, and without complaining with Sadi that :—

"Medjlis tamam shud ve b'akhir resid umr,"

i.e., "the measure of my years is full, and only now fortune begins to smile." I have in the prime of my life enjoyed to the full all the spiritual and worldly pleasures of existence. If there be anything which makes the approaching evening of one's life empty and unpleasant it is the grief henceforth no longer to be fit for work and labour. The desire to overcome the unconquerable is gone; the beautiful delusive pictures on the rosy horizon of the future have disappeared; henceforth it is the past only which offers me the cup of precious, sweet delight. No wonder, then, that I can spend hours by myself in pleasant retrospection, enjoying the visions of my brain. I see myself as the schoolboy of Duna Szerdahely, hurrying along towards the Jewish school, leaning on my crutch and warming my half-numbed fingers on frosty winter mornings

with the hot potatoes which I carried in my pocket for breakfast. Again I see myself laden with distinctions at the royal table in the palace of Windsor or Yildiz; dining from massive golden plates, and honoured by the highest representatives of Western and Eastern society. Then there arises before my mind the picture of my miserable plight as mendicant student spending the cold autumn night under the seat on the promenade at Presburg, and trembling with cold and fear; and scarcely has this gloomy picture faded from my view when I behold in its place the meeting-hall in London where the heads of England's proud aristocracy listen to my speech on the political condition of affairs in Central Asia, and loudly applaud. Seated all alone in my lonely room I see myself once more in the turmoil of life, and gazing in the richly-coloured kaleidoscope I am now intoxicated with bliss, then again trembling with fear. In clear outline, in the smallest details I enjoy those blissful moments of delivery from terrible distress, the threatening danger of lifelong slavery, or a martyr's awful death, which so often have stared me in the face. Whenever the scene of my audience with the Emir of Bokhara, or of the agonies of thirst in the Khalata desert, and the terrible image of Kulkhan, the Turcoman slave-dealer, come before me in my dreams, even to this day I look anxiously round and rejoice when I find that it is only a dream and not reality.

Fate has truly played me many queer tricks. And now, in the evening of my life, looking back upon the dark and the bright moments of my long career, I say with the English that my life has been "a life worth living," and would gladly go through the whole comedy again from beginning to end, and for a second time undergo all the labour, the fatigues, the mortal dangers. . . . So mighty and overpowering is the thirst for adventure in one's youth, and the consciousness of a fortunate escape from threatening danger is so deliciously exciting, that even in one's old age one can gloat over the recollection of it.

Once having tasted the charms of a life of adventure, the longing for it will ever remain, and a calm sea never seems as beautiful and sublime as the furiously whipped waves of a stormy ocean. There are natures not made for rest, they need perpetual motion and excitement to keep them happy. I belong to this latter category. I never did care for a quiet, peaceful existence, and I am glad to have possessed these qualities, for through them I have gained the two most precious jewels of human life—experience and independence—two treasures inseparably connected, and forming the true nucleus of human happiness. And now the evening of my life has come; the setting sun is casting warning shadows before me, and the chilliness of the approaching night becomes perceptible,

I sit and think of all the dangers, difficulties, and troubles of the day that it is past and in the possession of my two jewels I feel fully rewarded for all I have gone through. It has been my good fortune to contribute my mite to the enlightenment and improvement of my fellow-creatures; and when I made the joyful discovery that my books were being read all over Europe, America, and Australia, the consciousness of not having lived in vain filled me with a great happiness. I thought to myself, the father professor of the gymnasium at St. Georghen was wrong after all when he said, "Moshele, why dost thou study? It would be better for thee to be a butcher!" But more precious than all these good things is my dearly-bought experience.

My eye is still undimmed and my memory still clear, and even as in past years, so now two worlds with all their different countries, peoples, cities, morals, and customs rise up before my eyes. As the bee flies from one flower to another, so my thoughts wander from Europe to Asia and back again; everywhere I feel at home; from all sides well-known faces smile recognition; all sorts of people talk to me in their mother-tongue. Thus encompassing the wide world, feasting one's eyes on the most varied scenery—this, indeed, is a delight reserved for travellers only, for travelling is decidedly the greatest and noblest enjoyment in all the world. And so I have no reason to complain

of my lot, for if my life was hard the reward was abundant also, and now at the end of it I can be fully satisfied with the result of my struggles.

Appendices

APPENDIX I

EUROPEAN AND ASIATIC ECHOES OF MY INCOGNITO TRAVELS

In spite of all the slights I had to put up with, the first years after my return from Asia passed very pleasantly in beautiful Budapest. It gave me keen pleasure to see my books about my travels, and my ethnographical and political essays before me, in various European and Asiatic languages; and the voice of criticism, whether favourable or otherwise, had ceased to trouble me. But one thing was of special interest to me, viz., the effect which the reports of my travels would have in the Far East—that is, in Central Asia—for I felt sure that the news of the happy conclusion of my incognito would reach the borders of the Zerefshan, by way of India, or of Russia. That I was not mistaken in my supposition was proved by news received in later years from that neighbourhood. The first information came from the Russian diplomatist, Herr von Lankenau, who, shortly after the victory of the Russian arms at Samarkand, was sent by General Kauffmann to Bokhara to negotiate with the Emir, Mozaffareddin. Herr von Lankenau settled the principal conditions of the peace between Russia and Bokhara, and then spent some time in the Khanate near the Zerefshan.

He had also been an eye-witness of the events that had taken place there, including the revolt of the Crown Prince of Bokhara, Kette Töre, who was overcome in 1869; and four years later, when he returned to Germany, he published some of his experiences in the *Frankfürter Zeitung* of June, 1872, entitled, *Rachmed Inak, Moral Pictures from Central Asia; from the Russian of H. von Lankenau.* In No. 11 of the above-named paper we read the following: "In the whole of the Khanate he

(viz., Rachmed Inak) was the only person not deceived by the disguise of the foolhardy Vambéry. This traveller says that when he presented himself before Rachmed, who was then managing the affairs of the whole of Bokhara, in the absence of the Emir, he could not look that sharp-sighted governor in the eyes without fear and trembling, knowing that his secret was either discovered or in danger of discovery. When we once asked Rachmed Inak (a title bestowed on him later) if he remembered a pious pilgrim Hadji, with a very dark face, and lame, who had gone to Bokhara and Samarkand five years before, he replied, smiling, 'Although many pilgrims go to those holy places every year, I can guess which one you mean. He was a very learned Hadji, much more so than all the other wise men in Bokhara.'

"We now told him that the pilgrim was a European, and showed him Vambéry's book, translating to him the part in which the noted traveller speaks of Rachmed himself.

"'I was quite aware of the fact,' answered Rachmed, 'but I knew too that he was not dangerous, and I did not want to ruin such a learned man. It was the Mollahs' own fault that they did not guess whom they had with them. Who told them to keep their eyes and ears shut?'"

Now this Rachmed (more correctly Rahmet), whom I mentioned before (see page 207), appears to have risen in rank since my departure from Central Asia, for Herr von Lankenau speaks of him as "Bek" (governor) of Saadin, a district in the Khanate of Bokhara. I find it quite natural that he should have remembered me, but his statement that he spared my life on account of my erudition must be taken *cum grano salis*. I do not wish to affirm that I was not suspected by a good many; the number of efforts made to unmask me prove the contrary; but no one really detected me on account of my fortunate talent for languages, just as in Turkey and Persia I was hardly ever taken for a European. Had the people of Bokhara discovered my identity I should certainly not now be in a position to write my memoirs!

Many years later, in 1882, I received the second piece of information as to the effect of my incognito on the inhabitants of Central Asia, through the publications of Mr. Edmund

O'Donovan, a correspondent of the *Daily News*, who travelled in Asia from 1879 to 1881, and after his return to England published in 1882 a book of two volumes, entitled, *The Merv Oasis: Travels and Adventures East of the Caspian during the Years* 1879 *to* 1881, *including Five Months' Residence among the Tekkes of Merv.*

In the first volume of this book, on page 221, we find the following: "I usually confined myself to my dwelling" (the author is speaking of his stay among the Yomuts in Gömushtepe, where I myself had been), "making notes or conversing with the numerous visitors who invaded Durdi's residence. This was the same in which Vambéry had lived, for, notwithstanding that he succeeded in passing through unrecognised, as a European, the inhabitants afterwards learned his true character, doubtless from the Russians of the naval station at Ashurada close by. I heard of the famous Hungarian from a person named Kan Djan Kelte, the son of Kocsak, his former host. He described the traveller as being like Timsur Lenk, the great Central Asian conqueror, *i e.*, somewhat lame. Of course this knowledge of Vambéry was not arrived at until some time after his departure from among the Yomuts, as otherwise it might have fared badly with him, and he certainly would not at that time have been allowed to pass on. The most singular fact in connection with this matter was, that when I asked for the date of Vambéry's arrival at Gömushtepe my informer could give me only a very vague reply. This is characteristic of the Turkomans."

Of course this notice by the English traveller interested me very much. Kan Djan (the Khandjan mentioned in my book) had not the slightest idea of my disguise. He and the other Turkomans imagined me to be a genuine, pious, and inspired Osmanli from Constantinople, from whom many people begged letters of introduction to the Ottoman Embassy at Teheran, letters which I willingly gave. Two of them were given back to me after my return, by Haidar Effendi, then ambassador at the Persian Court, and I treasure them as valuable mementos.

There is no doubt there would have been little hope for me had my identity been discovered, and I learned later from pilgrims who stopped at Khandjan how vexed the Turkomans

were at being cheated out of such a windfall. But they were certainly much mistaken, for though the Shah, at the instance of the Emperor Napoleon III., had to pay 12,000 ducats ransom for Monsieur de Bloqueville, who was captured at Merv while in the Persian service, no one would have paid a penny for my ransom; and as, on account of my infirmity, I was useless for the slave market, a strong ass being worth more than a lame Hadji, it would not have been worth while to capture me.

Quite recently I heard of the third effect of my incognito in Afghanistan, and I must own I was not a little astonished. Readers of my book about my travels may remember that I had a strange adventure in Herat, when the governor of the province, Prince Yakub Khan, a son of Shir Ali Khan, then Emir of Afghanistan, who had already seen many Englishmen, distinguished my European features from those of all my Tartar companions, and tried to unmask me. That he should have found me out has always been a marvel to me, for in the poor student, in whose eyes only hunger and misery were visible, there was really very little to show European origin.

Now the mystery has been solved. Yakub Khan, who succeeded to his father's throne after so many vicissitudes, was so unfortunate that at the very beginning of his reign the English ambassador, Sir Louis Cavagnari, with his whole suite, was murdered by a fanatic mob in Kabul. Upon this the English took possession of his capital. Yakub Khan was taken to India as prisoner, and in the escort which accompanied the dethroned prince was Colonel Robert Warburton, a very able officer, and decidedly the one who best knew the border tribes, and who had been posted for years at the entrance to the Khyber Pass.

This officer (later Sir Robert Warburton), after his return to England, published his experiences in a book entitled *Eighteen Years in the Khyber* (1879 *to* 1898), *with Portraits, Maps, and Illustrations*. London: John Murray, 1900. In this book we read on pp. 89–90 the following:—

"After being introduced to Emir Yakub Khan, and seeing that all his wants were satisfied, I ventured to ask a question harking back to the time when Arminius Vambéry, after having seen Khiva and Bokhara, arrived at Herat and appeared in

Sardar Muhammed Yakub Khan's presence. Mr. Vambéry, in his book, states that, having given the benediction, he sat down next to the Sardar, and pushed his wazir to one side with a good deal of violence.

"The young Sardar, peering into his face, said: '*Walla au billa Faringhi hasti.* This Vambéry denied, and the conversation was then changed. Having reminded Amir Yakub Khan of the above circumstance, I asked him if he had identified Mr. Vambéry as a European, and on what grounds. The ex-Emir said: 'I was seated in an upper chamber watching a parade of my troops, and the band was playing on the open ground in front of my window. I noticed a man beating time to the music of the band with his foot. I knew at once that he must be a European, as Asiatics are not in the habit of doing this. Later on, when this man came into my darbar, I charged him with being a Faringhi, which he denied. However, I did not press the matter, being afraid that if suspicion had been roused against him, his life might not have been safe.'

"The same circumstance has been told to me by Sardar Muhammed Hassan Khan, six weeks before Emir Yakub Khan's arrival at Jellalabad. It may be noted that Sardar Yakub Khan and he were both at Herat when Mr. A. Vambéry journeyed there after his wonderful adventures and vicissitudes in Central Asia. Strange it must seem to have associated hourly for months throughout his dangerous travels in Khiva and Bokhara with his Dervish companions, to have shared in all their meals and joined in all their prayers, and yet to have defied all detection; and then to have been discovered by one keen-eyed observer for beating time with his foot to the music of an improvised European band, playing in the glacis of the fortress of Herat!"

Yes, Sir Robert Warburton's surprise is quite justified. I am astonished myself that such a thing should have happened to me, and that Melpomene should have betrayed me. I can only explain this by the fact that I, who have always been a lover of music, upon hearing the strains of European music for the first time after many years, unconsciously began to beat time with my foot. Under the influence of those sounds recalling the West, I had entirely forgotten hunger, misery, and the dangers that threatened me especially among the fanatic Afghans, so forcible

an impression did these tones from home make upon me in that foreign country.

Besides these three authentic bits of news, which I heard by chance, I also received other vague information through pilgrims from Central Asia who visited the Bokhara-Tekkesi (monastery) in Constantinople. My incognito travels have become quite legendary in Turkestan.

Hadji Bilal, my most intimate friend in the pilgrims' caravan with which we travelled, who visited Mecca and Medina in the seventies, remained firm in his belief in my Moslemism; he even asserted that if I had adopted an incognito at all, it was decidedly rather in Europe than in Asia, and that my *Christianity* was apocryphal. How far he was right in his supposition the reader of these memoirs can judge for himself.

In the matter of prejudice, superstition, and fanaticism, there is only this difference between the West, which is so proud of its civilisation, and uncultivated Asia, that in the West human passions are restrained by the laws of more advanced civilisation, and the adherents of foreign religious or political opinions, are exposed to less dangers in public life than in Asia where lawlessness and anarchy afford no protection.

Unfortunately I made bitter experiences in this respect. Where my origin was unknown, my career so full of struggles found much more acknowledgment than in those circles in which I, as a Jew, was defamed, and from the very beginning marked as a liar and deceiver. It was the same with my political opinions. Until the Franco-Russian alliance was strengthened I had many friends in France, but I lost them all the moment I took up my position as anti-Russian writer, in England's interest in Asia. Even in England I was made to feel the effect of political quarrels amongst the various parties. Mr. Ashton Dilke, a furious Liberal and a pro-Russian, in conjunction with Herr Eugen Schuyler, secretary to the American Embassy at St. Petersburg (whose ancestor took a prominent part against England in the American War of Independence), took it into his head to represent my journey through Central Asia as fiction, and attacked me in the *Athenæum* No. 2,397. He asserted that I, a connoisseur of Oriental languages, had never been in Bokhara nor

Samarkand, and had written my book with no other foundation than the facts I had collected in the Bosphorus, and as a proof of this assertion it was said that I had described the famous nephrit stone on the tomb of Timour as green, whereas in reality it was blue. Little or no notice was taken of this attack by my friends in England, and I was not a little surprised when the noted Russian orientalist, Mr. W. Grigorieff, declared in *Russki Mir* that this attack on the authenticity of my journey was ridiculous and inadmissible, and designated me as an audacious and remarkable traveller of recent date, though he had sharply criticised my *History of Bokhara* some time before.

Considering my strongly marked opposition to Russia, this trick of holding out a saving hand seems rather strange; but the kindness evinced missed its aim, for my political works continued to be anti-Russian.

Also Mr. Schuyler, the American diplomatist, in spite of the hatred he bore to England, changed his tone in time; for when he visited Budapest in 1886, I received the following letter from him :—

"BUDAPEST, HOTEL KÖNIGIN VON ENGLAND,
"*Monday, November* 8, 1886.

"DEAR MR. VAMBÉRY,—

"If you are willing to overlook some hasty criticisms of mine when I was in Central Asia, and will receive me, I shall be most happy to call upon you.

"Believe me, dear sir, yours most sincerely,
"EUGENE SCHUYLER."

Of course I overlooked the "hasty criticisms," gave Mr. Schuyler a warm reception, and have corresponded with him ever since. I have only mentioned this incident to prove how very unstable criticism sometimes is, and how very often the private interests of religion or of politics can lead to the attack on a man's character and his honour.

A certain Professor William Davies (?) took it into his head to give lectures as pseudo-Vambéry, and for the sake of greater resemblance even feigned lameness, but was unmasked by my deceased friend, Professor Kiepert, on the 22nd of January, 1868;

others again tried to represent me as an impostor, and discredited the result of my dangers and privations from personal motives.

I have had endless opportunities of studying human nature in all its phases. It seemed as though an unkind fate refused to remove the bitter chalice from my lips, and if, in spite of all, I never lost courage, nor my lively disposition, I have only my love of work to thank for it; it drew a veil over all that was unpleasant, and permitted me to gaze joyfully from my workroom on the outside world. Unfavourable criticism, which no man of letters can escape, least of all an explorer who has met with uncommon experiences, never offended or hurt me. But what was most unpleasant was the thorn of envy the pricks of which I was made to feel, and the attacks made with evil designs, in which the Russian press excelled.

Madame de Novikoff, *née* Olga Kireef, did her utmost to discredit me in England, and in order to blunt the point of my anti-Russian pen, she suddenly discovered that I was no Hungarian, but a fraudulent Jew who had never been in Asia at all, but only wished to undermine the good relations between England and Russia. This skilled instrument of Russian politics on the Thames, rejoiced in the friendship of Mr. Gladstone, but her childish attacks on me have had little effect in shaking my position and reputation among the British public.

With the exception of such incidents I had reason to be content with the criticism of my adventurous journey.

APPENDIX II

MY SCIENTIFIC–LITERARY ACTIVITY

My many years of practical study of the Asiatic world, of which I have attempted to give an account in the preceding pages, were necessarily followed as soon as I had leisure and quiet by a period of literary activity. During those years of travel such a

vast amount of material had been accumulating that I must needs put some of it in writing, and relate some of the things I had seen and experienced. And now that the beautiful summertime of my life is past, and I look back upon that period of literary work, I must preface my account of these labours by stating that in point of quantity, quality, and tendency these productions were quite in keeping with my previous studies. A self-educated man, without any direction or guidance in my studies, without even a definite object in view, my literary career must necessarily also be full of the weaknesses, faults, and deficiencies of the self-made man. Just as there are poets by nature, so I was a scholar by nature, but as there is not and could not be a "*scientifica licentia*," in the same way as there is a "*poetica licentia*," so the difficulties I had to fight against were proportionally as great as the deficiencies and blunders which criticism rightly detected in my works. Hasty and rash as I had been in acquiring knowledge (for which a powerful memory and a fiery zeal are chiefly to blame), I was equally impatient to accomplish the work on hand. When once I had begun to write a book, I gave myself neither rest nor peace until I saw it finished and printed on my table, regardless of the saying, "*Nonum prematur in annum.*" Unfortunately my labour lay chiefly in as yet unfrequented regions of philology and ethnography, consequently the authorities at my disposal were very limited, and the few that were available were hardly worth consulting, so I did not trouble with them.

Besides, to make a thorough study of ancient authorities went quite against the grain with me. I did not care to be always referring to what others had said and done and to enter into minute speculations and criticisms in regard to them. To use the expression—I objected to chew the cud that others had eaten. From a strictly scientific point of view this was no doubt a grave fault in me. It has always been the novel, the unknown, and untold which attracted me. Only quite new subjects took my fancy, only in those regions did I burn with desire to earn my literary spurs, and although I had not much fear of any one overtaking me in the race, I was for ever hurrying and hankering after novelty and originality, not to say fresh revelations. I was always in a rush, and so did not give the necessary care and attention to

the work on hand. When in the biographical notices about my insignificant person, which have appeared from time to time, I see myself described as a learned man, this most unfitting qualification always surprises me, for I am anything but learned in the ordinary sense of the word, and could not possibly be. To be a scholar one needs preparation, schooling, and disposition, all of which I lacked; of a scholar one can say, "*Non nascitur sed fit*," while all through my life, in all my sayings and doings I have always acted under the influence of my naturally good or bad qualities, and have been solely guided by these. The dark side and the disadvantages of such a character do undoubtedly weigh heavily, but the mischief done is to a certain extent rectified by its very decided advantages. Lack of caution makes one bold and daring, and where there is no great depth, there is the greater extension over the area one has chosen for one's field of operation. In this manner only can it be explained why my literary activity encompassed such various regions of Oriental knowledge, and why I could act as philologist, geographer, ethnographer, historian, ethnologist, and politician all at once. Of all the weaknesses and absurdities of the so-called learned guild, the conventional modesty of scholars has always been the most hateful and objectionable to me. I loathed nothing so much as the hypocritical hiding of the material advantage which scholars as much as, if not more than other mortals have in view, and nothing is to my mind more despicable than the professed indifference to praise and recognition; for we all know that scholars and writers are the vainest creatures born.

Since I am not a professional scholar, I need not be modest according to the rules of the trade, and as I am about to speak of my literary activity, and discuss and criticise my own work, I will leave scholarly modesty quite out of the question, and freely and frankly give my opinion on the products of my pen.

1. *Travels in Central Asia.*

This work, which appeared in several editions in various European and Asiatic languages, is interesting reading because of the curious methods of travel and the novelty of the adventures. Incognito journeys had been made before my time to Mecca and

Medina by Burton, Burckhart, Maltzan, Snouck-Hurgronje, and others, but as a Dervish living on alms, and undergoing all the penalties of fakirdom, I was certainly the first and only European. However interesting the account of my adventures may be, the geographico-scientific results of my journey are not in adequate proportion to the dangers and sufferings I underwent. Astronomical observations were impossible, neither was I competent to make them. Orography and hydrography were never touched upon. The fauna and flora were closed books to me, and as for geology, I did not even know this science by name before I came West. But on the other hand, I can point out with pleasure that in certain parts of Central Asia I was the first European traveller, and have contributed many names of places to the map of the region, and furnished many facts hitherto unknown about the ethnographical relations of the Turks in these parts. What made my book of travels popular was unquestionably the account of my adventures and the continual dangers in which I found myself. The European reader can hardly form any conception of my sufferings and privations; they evoked the interest and the sympathy of the cultured world; but he who has read the preceding pages, and is acquainted with the struggles of my childhood and youth, will not be surprised that the early schooling of misery and privation I underwent had sufficiently hardened me to bear the later heavy struggles. The difference between the condition of a poor Jew-boy and a mendicant Dervish in Central Asia is, after all, not very great. The cravings of hunger are not one whit easier to bear or less irksome in cultured Europe than in the Steppes of Asia, and the mental agony of the little Jew, despised and mocked by the Christian world, is perhaps harder than the constant fear of being found out by fanatical Mohammedans. As my first publication was so much appreciated, I enlarged, at the instigation of my friends, my first account, and published—

2. *Sketches from Central Asia,*

in which on the one hand I elaborated the account of my adventures with fresh incidents, and on the other introduced those ethnographical, political, and economic data which I was un-

able to incorporate in my traveller's account written in London, as the documents needed for this were left behind at home in Pest. With this book, likewise translated in several languages, I attracted more attention in scientific circles, in consequence of which I was nominated honorary member of a geographical society; but still from a scientific point of view this book does not deserve much attention, for in spite of many new data, it is altogether too fragmentary, and bears the unmistakable stamp of *dilettantism*. To be an expert ethnologist I ought to have known much more about anthropology and anatomy, and particularly the want of measurements indispensable to anthropological researches, made it impossible for me to furnish accurate descriptive delineations. Only the part about the political situation, *i.e.*, the rivalry between England and Russia in Central Asia, was of any real value. This part, which first appeared in the columns of the periodical *Unsere Zeit*, was freely commented upon and discussed in official and non-official circles. To this article I owe my introduction into political literature, and at the same time the animosity of Russia, I might say the violent anger which the Russian press has ever since expressed at the mention of my name. In Chapter VIII. I have referred more fully to this part of my literary career, and will only mention here that I did not enter upon this course with any special purpose in view, or with any sense of pleasure. All I cared for was to make known my purely philological experiences, and accordingly as soon as I returned from London I set to work upon my—

3. *Chagataic Linguistic Studies.*

The fact that I, a self-taught man, with no scholastic education —a man who was no grammarian, and who had but very vague notions about philology in general should dare to venture on a philological work, and that, moreover, in German; that I should dare to lay this before the severe forum of expert philology—this, indeed, was almost too bold a stroke, wellnigh on a par with my journey into Central Asia. Fortunately at that time I was still ignorant of the *furor teutonicus*, and the spiteful nature of philologists. I was moving, so to speak, on untrodden ground, for with the exception of the specimen Chagataic passages pub-

lished by Quatremere in his *Chrestomathie Orientale*, and what was published in the original by Baber and Abulghazi, East Turkish was an entirely unknown language to Western Orientalists. I began by giving specimens of national literature, proverbs, and the different dialects of Turkish inner Asia. Then I gave a whole list of East-Turkish books of which no one in Europe had ever heard, and I published the first East-Turkish dictionary which the French scholar Pavel de Courteille incorporated in his later issued work, *Dictionnaire Turk-Oriental.* He says in his preface, "J'avoue tout de suite, que j'ai mis à contribution ce dictionnaire, en insérant dans mon travail autant que je le pouvais, le livre le plus instructif qui fait grand honneur à son auteur," as he called this my first philological production (Preface, p. xi.). But still more did it surprise me to find that the Russian Orientalist, Budagow, who was so much nearer akin to this branch of philology, used my work in his elaborate dictionary; and so, although the critical press took little notice of my first philological efforts, I was nevertheless encouraged to persevere, and began to realise that without being a scholarly linguist one can yet do useful work in this line. "It is but the first step that costs," says the proverb. My Chagataic linguistic studies were soon followed by isolated fragments on this subject, and the more readily they were received the deeper I endeavoured to penetrate into the ancient monuments of the Turkish language. As a result of these efforts appeared my—

4. *Uiguric Linguistic Monuments*,

which was one of the hardest and best paying labours I accomplished in Turkology, and which advanced me to the title of specialist in Turkish languages. From the *Turkish Grammar* by Davids, and an article of Joubert's in the *Journal Asiatique*, I had heard of the existence of a mysterious Uiguric manuscript, and when Lord Strangford, moreover, drew my attention to it, and advised me to try and decipher it, I burned with ambition, and did not rest until I had secured the loan of this precious manuscript from the Imperial Library at Vienna. The faint, uncertain characters, the value of which I had to guess in many cases, the curious wording, and the peculiarly original contents of the text,

exercised an overpowering charm over me. For more than a year I gazed daily for hours at the sybillic signs, until at last I succeeded bit by bit in reading and understanding the manuscript. My joy was boundless. I immediately decided to publish the deciphered portion, and when, after much trouble and expense, for the type had first to be made, I saw the imposing quarto before my eyes, I really believed I had accomplished an important work. I was strengthened in this idea by the extremely appreciative comments of my colleagues, and yet it was but a delusion, for my knowledge of the dialects in the northern and north-easterly frontier districts of the Turkish languages, was not sufficient to enable me to understand the entire manuscript, and to accomplish the deciphering of the entire document. My better qualified and more thoroughly versed successor, Dr. W. Radloff, was able to show better results at once, and the only satisfaction that remains to me from this laborious task is the fact that to me belongs the right of priority; and that Dr. Radloff, following in my footsteps, attained after thirty years a higher standpoint and wider view, is due in a large measure to the fact that in course of time he managed to secure a copy of the *Kudatku Biliks* written in Arabic characters, and consequently more legible.

And so my *Uiguric Linguistic Monuments*, in spite of many faults and defects, ranks among the showpieces of my scientific-literary activity. In any case I had proved that without being a schooled philologist one can be a pioneer in this line. Following up this only partially successful experiment, I continued for some time my researches in the field of Turkology. I wrote an—

5. *Etymological Dictionary of the Turkish Language*,

the first ever written on this subject of philology, in which, without any precedent, I collected, criticised and compared, until I succeeded in finding out the stems and roots, and ranged them into separate families. On this slippery path, on which even the greatest authorities in philology sometimes stumble, and by their awkward fall bring their colleagues with them and amuse the world, I, with my inadequate knowledge of the subject, stumbled and slipped all the oftener. In spite of all this, how-

ever, even my bitterest rival could not deny that I had succeeded in unravelling the etymology of a considerable number of Turkish words, and in giving a concrete meaning to many abstract conceptions. So mighty is the magic charm of discovery that for months together, by day and by night, I could think of nothing but Turkish root-words, and as I generally worked from memory, and never in my life, so to speak, took any notes, it was a real joy to me to follow up the transitions and changes of an idea to its remotest origin. As a matter of fact this kind of study, apart from my inadequate knowledge, was not at all in keeping with my tendencies. Under the delusive cover of etymological recreation the dry monotony of the study soon became irksome, and I was quite pleased when this etymological pastime led me to the investigation of the—

6. *Primitive Culture of the Turko-Tartar People.*

Here I felt more at home and stood on more congenial ground, for here philology served as a telescope, with which I could look into the remotest past of Turkish tribe-life, and discover many valuable details of the ethnical, ethical and social conditions of the Turk. As I have made up my mind to be entirely frank and open in this criticism of my own work, I am bound to say that I consider this little book one of the best productions of my pen. It abounds in valuable suggestions, mere suggestions unfortunately, about the ethnology of the Turk, which could only flow from the pen of a travelling philologist who united to a knowledge of the language, a penetration into the customs, character and views in general of the people under consideration, and who had it all fresh in his mind and could speak from practical experience. The recognition which this little book received from my fellow-philologists was most gratifying to me, and was the chief cause which led me to write about—

7 *The Turkish People in their Ethnological and Ethnographical Relationship.*

In this work, planned on a much larger scale, I endeavoured to incorporate my personal experiences of the Turks in general,

and also to introduce the notes and extracts gleaned on this subject from European and Asiatic literature. In both these efforts I had certain advantages over others. In the first place no ethnographer had ever had such long and intimate intercourse with members of this nation, and secondly, there were not many ethnographers who could avail themselves as well as I could of the many-tongued sources of information. Here again I found myself on untrodden paths, and the accomplished work had the general defects and charms of a first effort. On the whole it was favourably criticised, and I was therefore the more surprised that the book had such a very limited sale. I flattered myself I had written a popular book, or at least a book that would please the reading public, and I was grievously disappointed when, after a lapse of ten years, not three hundred copies had been sold. I came to the conclusion that the public at large troubles itself very little about the origin, customs and manners, the ramifications and tribal relationships of the Turks, and that geography and ethnography were only appreciated by the reading public as long as they were well flavoured with stirring adventures. In my book about the Turkish people I gave a general survey of all the tribes and branches of the race collectively, and although no such work had ever been written about any other Asiatic tribal family, I was mistaken as to its success. In spite of my favourable literary position in England, all my endeavours to issue an English edition of this work were in vain.

East Turkish, both in language and literature, being one of my favourite studies, and always giving me new thoughts and ideas, I published simultaneously with my *Turkish People*, an Ösbeg epic poem entitled—

8. *The Sheibaniade,*

which I copied from the original manuscript in the Imperial Library at Vienna during several summer vacations, and afterwards printed at my own expense. The copying was a tedious business. The writing of 4,500 double stanzas tried my eyes considerably, but the historical and linguistic value of the poem were well worth the trouble. It is a unique copy. Neither in Europe nor in Asia have I ever heard of the existence of a duplicate, and it was

therefore well worth while to make it accessible for historical research. The beautiful edition of this work, with facsimile and a chromo-photographic title page, cost me nearly fourteen hundred florins, and as scarcely sixty copies were sold I did not get back a fourth of the sum laid out upon it. The scientific criticism was limited to one flattering notice in the *Journal Asiatique*. The rest of the literati, even Orientalists, hardly deigned to take any notice of my publication, for the number of students of this particular branch of Oriental languages was, and is still, very small in Europe; even in Russia it does not yet receive the attention it so richly deserves.

I can therefore not blame myself that I was urged on in this branch of my literary career by the hope of moral or material gain; it was simply my personal liking and predilection which made me pursue these subjects. Only occasionally, when forced thereto by material needs, perhaps also sometimes for the sake of a change, I left my favourite study and turned to literary work which could command a larger public and give me a better chance of making money by it.

Thus it came about that soon after my return from Central Asia I published the account of my—

9. *Wanderings and Experiences in Persia.*

But this was familiar ground, fully and accurately described elsewhere, both geographically and ethnographically. It was at most my exciting personal adventures as pseudo-Sunnite amongst the Shiites which could lay claim to any special interest, perhaps also to some extent its casual connection with my later wanderings in Central Asia; for the rest, however, this volume has little value, and with the exception of England, Germany, Sweden, and Hungary, where translations appeared, it has attracted no notice to speak of. Not much better fared my—

10. *Moral Pictures from the Orient.*

This had already appeared in part in a German periodical, *Westermann's Monthly*, and was further enlarged with sketches of family life in Turkey, Persia, and Central Asia, interspersed

with personal observations on the religious and social customs of these people. As far as I know there are, besides the original German edition, a Danish and a Hungarian translation of this work, but although much read and discussed, this book has not been of much, if any, material benefit to me, beyond the honorarium paid me by the "Society of German literature." With this book I have really contributed to the knowledge of the Orient in the regions named just as with my—

11. *Islam in the Nineteenth Century*

I directed the attention of the reading public to those social and political reforms which our intervention and our reformatory efforts in the Moslem East have called forth; but practically both the one and the other were failures. It was not at all my intention to write a sort of defence of Islam, as was generally imagined, but I endeavoured, on the contrary, to show up the mistakes, weaknesses and prejudices which characterised this transition period, indeed I ruthlessly tore away the veil; but on the other hand I did not hesitate to lay bare our own neglects and faults. My object was to correct the judgment of Europe in regard to the Moslem society of Asia, and to point out that with patience and a little less egotism and greed we should accomplish more; that we are not yet justified in looking upon Islam as a society condemned to destruction, and in breaking the staff over it. As a purely theoretical study, perhaps also on account of my very liberal religious notions expressed therein, I have not been able to publish this book in England; hence the circle of readers was very limited, but all the more select, and I had the satisfaction of having stirred up a very serious question.

A book which, to my great surprise, had an extraordinary success was my publication in English of the—

12. *Life and Adventures of Arminius Vambéry, written by Himself,*

which in a very short time passed through seven editions, and was extraordinarily popular in England, America and Australia. It is in reality one of my most insignificant, unpretentious

literary efforts, written at the request of my English publisher, and is by no means worthy of the reception it had. This made me realise the truth of the proverb: "*Habent sua fata libelli*," for the book is nothing but a recapitulation of my wanderings, including my experiences in Turkey and Persia, which were now for the first time brought before the English public. But what chiefly secured its friendly reception was a few short paragraphs about my early life, a short *resumé* of the first chapter of the present work, and these details from the life of a self-made man did not fail to produce an impression upon the strongly developed individuality of the Anglo-Saxon race. I am not sure how many editions it went through, but I have evident proofs of the strong hold this book had upon all ranks and classes of English-speaking people. Comments and discussions there were by the hundred, and private letters expressive of readers' appreciation kept flowing in to me from the three parts of the world.

Curiously enough this book excited interest only with the Anglo-Saxons; to this day it has not been translated in any other foreign language, not even in my Hungarian mother-tongue. Society in Eastern Europe still suffers from the old-world delusion that nobility of blood is everything, and considers that it could not possibly condescend to be edified by the experiences of a poorly-born man of obscure origin; but the Anglo-Saxon with his liberal notions revels in the story of the terrible struggles of the poor Jewish boy, the servant and the teacher, and of what he finally accomplished. This is the chief reason which made the most insignificant of my books so popular with the Anglo-Saxons, a book with which I promulgated more knowledge about Moslem Asia than with all my other works put together, more even than many highly learned disquisitions of stock-Orientalists.

I will not deny that the unexpected success of this book was my principal inducement in writing the present Autobiography.

In my various literary productions I had chiefly aimed at a diffusing of general knowledge about the Moslem East, but at home (in Hungary) I had often been reproached with absolute neglect as regards the national Magyar side of my studies. I therefore decided to publish my views about the—

in a separate volume. In different scientific articles I had already hinted at the manner in which I intended to treat this still open question. I pointed out that Árpád and his warriors who, towards the close of the ninth century founded what is now Hungary, were most certainly Turkish nomads forming a north-westerly branch of the Turkish chain of nationalities; that they pushed forward from the Ural, across the Volga, into Europe, and established in Pannonia what is now the State of Hungary. The ethnology and the language of the Magyars is a curious mixture of dialects, for the Turkish nomads during their wanderings incorporated into their language many kindred Finnish-Ugrian elements, and in the lowlands of Hungary they came upon many ethnological remains of the same original stock. All these various elements gradually amalgamated and formed the people and the language of Hungary as it is now. Considering this problematic origin, and the elasticity of philological speculation, it stands to reason that much has been written and argued in Hungary about the origin of the nation. Many different views were held, and at the time that I joined in the discussion, the theory of the Finnish-Ugrian descent of the Magyars held the upper hand. My labour, therefore, was directed against these, for on the ground of my personal experiences in the manner of living and the migrations of the Turkish nomads in general, based upon historical evidence, I endeavoured to prove the Turkish nationality of Árpád and his companions. I conceded the mixed character of the language with the reservation, however, that in the amalgamation not the Finnish-Ugrian but the Turko-Tartar element predominated. Philologists opposed this view in their most zealous and ablest representative, Doctor Budenz, a German by birth; he pleaded with all the enthusiasm of an etymological philologist for the eminently Ugrian character of the Magyar tongue. The arguments of the opposing party were chiefly based upon what they considered the sacred and fundamental rules of comparative philology; but to me these threw no light upon the matter, and were not likely to convince me of my error. The struggle,

which my fanatical opponents made into a personal matter, lasted for some time, but the old Latin proverb: "*Philologi certant, tamen sub judice lis*," again proved true in this case. The etymological Salto Mortales and the grammatical violence of the opposing school had rudely shaken my confidence in the entire apparatus of comparative philology. I realised that with such evidence one might take any one Ural-Altaic language and call it the nearest kindred tongue of the Magyar. The etymological connection between the Tartar words "tongue" and "navel"—because both are long, hanging objects—and the use of fictitious root-words to explain the inexplicable, with which my learned opponent tried to justify his theory, were altogether too fantastic and too airy for my practical notions. So I gave up the struggle and satisfied myself with the result that the home-bred Magyars were no longer exclusively considered to be of Finnish-Ugrian extraction, as used to be the case, and that even my bitterest opponent had to allow the possibility that Árpád and his warriors were originally Turks.

The learned world outside naturally took but little part in this essentially Magyar controversy, and I was, therefore, all the more pleased to see Ranke, the Nestor of German his torical research, siding with me. He referred to the historical evidence of one Ibn Dasta and Porphyrogenitus, who had declared that the Magyars overrunning Hungary at the close of the ninth century were Turks. In Hungary itself the majority of the public shared my views, and the seven hundred copies of the first edition of my book were sold in three days.

This, of course, was due more to the national and political than to the purely scientific interest of the question, since the Magyars, proud of their Asiatic origin, very much disliked, nay even thought it insulting that their ancestors should have to claim blood-relationship with poor barbarians of high northern regions, living by fishing and hunting, Ostiaks, Vogules, and such like racial fragments. The Hungarian priding himself on his warlike spirit, his valour, and his independence, would rather claim relationship with Huns and Avars, depicted by the mediæval Christian world as terror-spreading, mighty warriors; and the national legend correctedly accepted this view, for as

my further researches revealed, and as I tried to prove in my subsequent book, entitled—

14. *Growth and Spread of the Magyars,*

the present Magyar nation has proceeded from a gradual, scarcely definable settlement of Ural-Altaic elements in the lowlands of Hungary. Originally as warriors and protectors of the Slavs settled in Pannonia, they became afterwards their lords and masters, something like the Franks in Gaul and the Varangians in Russia, with this difference, however, that the latter exchanged their language for that of their subjects, and became lost among the masses of the subjugated people, while the Magyars to this day have preserved their language and their national individuality intact, and in course of time were able to establish a Magyar ethnography. Looking at it from this point of view, not Asia but the middle Danube-basin becomes the birthplace of Magyarism. Its mixed ethnography, formerly known by various appellations, became through its martial proclivities a terror to the Christian West, and compelled Charlemagne to bring a strong Christian coalition against it in the field. This first crusade of the Occident, bent but did not break the power of the Ural-Altaic warriors, who ruled from the Moldau as far as the borders of Upper Austria; for the remnants retiring behind the Theis soon after received reinforcements from a tribe of Turks known as the "Madjars," *i.e.*, Magyars, under the command of Árpád, whose descendants accepted Christianity and established the Hungary of the present day, both politically and ethnically.

Curiously enough this ethnological discussion was not at all agreeable to my so-called paleo-Magyar compatriots. The romantic legend of the invasion of Árpád into Pannonia with his many hundred thousand warriors, sounds more beautiful in the ears of the Magyar patriots, than their prosaic derivation from a confused ethnical group; as if there were any single nation in Europe which is not patched and pieced together from the most diverse elements, and only in later times has presented itself as an undivided whole. In the Hungarians, however, this childish vanity is the more ridiculous since it is much more glorious, as a

small national fragment, to play for centuries the *rôle* of conqueror, and in the strength of its national proclivities to absorb other elements, than to conquer with the sword and then to be absorbed in the conquered element as Franks, Varangians, and others have been. Truly nations, as well as individuals, have to pass through an infant stage, and I am not surprised that this conception of mine, and my solution of the ethnological problem, did not find much favour in Hungary.

Before concluding this review of my scientific-literary activity, I should mention that I also have ventured into the regions of history, a totally unknown field to me, wherein, as is the case with many hazardous expeditions, I betrayed more temerity than forethought. My book on the—

15. *History of Bokhara,*

in two volumes, published in German, Hungarian, English, and Russian, has done more harm than good to my literary reputation. The motive for writing this book was the purchase of some Oriental manuscripts I discovered in Bokhara, which, I thought, were unknown in Europe. To some extent this was the case, for of *Tarikhi Narshakhi*, and the history of *Seid Rakim Khan* both of which furnish rich material for the history of Central Asia, our Orientalists had never heard. But in the main I was working under a delusion, owing to my insufficient literary knowledge; some passages, especially in the ancient history of Central Asia, had already been worked out by learned scholars, and it was only about modern times that I could tell anything new.

Professional critics were merciless. They seemed to take a malicious pleasure in running me down; especially was this the case in Russia, where I was already hated for my political opinions and activity. The Oriental historian, Professor Grigorieff, made a special point of proving the worthlessness of my book, and tried to annihilate the anti-Russian publishers. The second *criticus furiosus* was Professor von Gutschmid, a learned man, but also a nobleman of the purest blood, who for his God and king entered the arena, and also wanted to wreak his anger upon me because he took me for a German renegade,

and for my desertion of the bonds of Germanism considered me worthy of censure. For his well-deserved correction of my scientific blunders I am grateful to the man, but I deny the accusation of being a renegade. I have never quite understood why in Germany the honour of German nationality should be forced upon me; why I should be taken for a Hamburger, a Dresdener, a Stuttgarter, since my ancestors for several generations were born Hungarians, and my education had been strictly Magyar.

It is this very Magyar education, and the complete amalgamation of myself with the ruling national spirit of my native land which induced me to Magyarise my German name, as has been the custom with us for centuries. Considering that Germans with purely French, Italian, Danish, Slav, and other names figure in German literature and politics, without the purity of their German descent being at all questioned, one might readily regard the Hungarian custom of Magyarising our names as childish and unmotived. Yet this is not so. Small nations like Hungary, constantly threatened with the danger of denationalisation, all the more anxiously guard their national existence in the sanctity of their language, and tenaciously hold to their national characteristics. With such people it is quite natural that they should lay more stress than is absolutely necessary upon the outward signs. The Hungarian born, who in his feelings, thoughts, and aspirations, owns himself a true Hungarian, desires also in name to appear as a Hungarian, because he does not want to be mixed up with any foreign nationality, as might easily be the case with a prominent writer. On these grounds Petrovich has become Petöfi, Schedel Toldy, Hundsdorfer Hunfalvi, etc., and for this reason also I Magyarised my name.

But to come back to my *History of Bokhara*, I must honestly confess that the ambition of writing the first history of Transoxania brought me more disillusionment than joy, for in spite of the praise bestowed upon me by the uninitiated, I had soon to realise that I had not studied the subject sufficiently, and had not made enough use of available material.

I fared somewhat better with my second purely historical work, published simultaneously in America and England—

16. *The Story of Hungary.*

In this I had but the one object in view, namely to introduce the history of my native land into the series called "The Story of the Nations." As I wrote only a few chapters myself, and am indebted for the rest to Hungarian men of the profession, I can only lay claim to the title of editor, but this literary sponsorship gave me much pleasure, for the *History of Hungary*, which first appeared in English, and was afterwards translated into different languages, has had a sale it could never have had in Hungary itself. The service hereby rendered to my compatriots has, however, never been appreciated at home; the very existence of the book has been ignored.

This closes the list of my personal publications, partly scientific, partly popular, in the course of twenty years. Of my journalistic activity during this same term, I have spoken already (Chap. VIII.).

I cannot hide the fact that as I increased in years my creative power visibly decreased. What I learned in the sixties, or rather tried to learn, did not long remain in my memory, and could not be called material from which anything of lasting value could be made. Only the custom of many years' active employment urged me on to labour, and under the influence of this incitement appeared my smaller works.

1. *The Travels and Adventures of the Turkish Admiral Sidi Ali Reis, in India, Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Persia, during the years* 1553–1556. London, 1899.

2. *Noten Zu den Alttürkischen Inschriften der Mongolei und Siberiens.* Helsingfors, 1899. (Notes to the Old Turkish Inscriptions of Mongolia and Siberia.)

3. *Alt-Osmanische Sprachstudien.* Leiden, 1901. (Old Osmanli Linguistic Studies.)

It never entered my mind to try to attract the special attention of the profession with these unassuming contributions. It is not given to all, as to a Mommsen, Herbert Spencer, Ranke, Schott, and others, to boast of unenfeebled mental powers in their old

age. *Sunt atque fines!* And he who disregards the approach of the winter of life is apt to lose the good reputation gained in better days.

APPENDIX III

MY RELATIONS WITH THE MOHAMMEDAN WORLD

I WILL here shortly relate in what manner I became connected with the Mohammedans of India. My own depressing circumstances at the time of my sojourn in Asia had given me a fellow-feeling with the downtrodden, helpless population of the East, and the more I realised the weakness of Asiatic rule and government, the more I was compelled to draw angry comparisons between the condition of things there and in Western lands. Since then my judgment of human nature has become enlarged, and consequently more charitable, but at the time I am speaking of, the more intimately I became acquainted with the conditions of the various countries of Europe the more clearly I seemed to see the causes of the decline in the East. Our exalted Western professions of righteousness and justice after all did not amount to much. Christianity seemed as fanatical as Islam itself, and before very long I came to the conclusion that our high-sounding efforts at civilisation in the East were but a cloak for material aggression and a pretext for conquest and gain. All this roused my indignation and enlisted my sympathies with the peoples of the Islamic world. My heart went out in pity towards the helpless victims of Asiatic tyranny, despotism, and anarchy, and when an occasional cry was raised in some Turkish, Persian or Arabic publication for freedom, law and order, the call appealed to me strongly and I felt compelled to render what assistance I could. This was the beginning of my pro-Islamic literary activity, and as a first result I would mention my work on *Islam in the Nineteenth Century*, followed by several short articles. Later I proceeded from writing to public speaking, and I delivered lectures in various parts of England, a specimen of which was my lecture in Exeter Hall, in

May, 1889, when I took for my subject "The Progress of Culture in Turkey." The fame of these lectures resounded not only in Turkey but also among the Moslems of South Russia, Java, Africa and India; for the day of objective unbiassed criticism of Islam was gradually passing away. In India the free institutions of the English had awakened among the Mohammedan population also an interest in the weal or woe of their religious communities. In Calcutta the "Mohammedan Literary Society," under the presidency of the learned Nawab Abdul Latif Bahadur, was already making itself prominent, and shortly after my lecture at Exeter Hall, I received an account of the history of the Society, and its president, in a warmly worded letter accompanying it, expressed his thanks for my friendly interest in the affairs of Islam. I made use of this opportunity to address a letter to the Mohammedans of India, explaining the grounds for my Moslem sympathies, encouraging the Hindustani to persevere in the adopted course of modern culture, and by all means to hold fast to the English Government, the only free and humane power of the West. This letter ran as follows:—

"BUDAPEST UNIVERSITY,
"*August*, 12, 1889.

"My DEAR NAWAB,—I beg to acknowledge with many, many thanks the receipt of the valuable and highly interesting pamphlets you so kindly sent me, on the rise, growth and activity of the Mohammedan Literary Society of Calcutta. Being deeply interested in the welfare and cultural development of the Mohammedan world, I have long watched with the greatest attention the progress of the Society created and so admirably presided over by yourself. I need scarcely say that I much appreciate the opportunity now afforded me of entering into personal relations with a man of your abilities, patriotism, and sincere devotion to your fellow countrymen.

"The greater part of my life has been devoted to the study of Mohammedan nations and countries, and I feel the keenest interest in the work of the Calcutta Literary Society of Mohammedans, which proves most eloquently that a nation whose sacred book contains the saying, 'Search for wisdom from the cradle to the grave,' will not and cannot lag behind in culture, and that

Islam still has it in its power to revive the glory of the middle ages, when the followers of the Koran were the torchbearers of civilisation.

"From a political point of view, also, I must congratulate you on what you have done in showing your co-religionists the superiority of Western culture as seen in the English administration, in contrast to the dim or false light shed abroad from elsewhere. I am not an Englishman, and I do not ignore the shortcomings and mistakes of English rule in India, but I have seen much of the world both in Europe and Asia, and studied the matter carefully, and I can assure you that England is far in advance of the rest of Europe in point of justice, liberality, and fair-dealing with all entrusted to her care.

"You and your fellow-workers among the Indian Mohammedans, the successors of Khalid, may justly pride yourselves on having introduced Monotheism into India; it is your privilege and your duty by advice and example to lead the people of Hindustan to choose suitable means for modernising your matchless but antiquated culture. Would that Turkey, which is fairly advanced in modern science, could become the instructor and civiliser of the Mohammedan world; but Turkey, alas, is surrounded by enemies and weakened by continual warfare. She has to struggle hard for her own existence and has no chance of attending to her distant co-religionists, much to the grief of her noble and patriotic ruler whom I am proud to call my friend.

"In default of a Moslem leader you have done well to adopt English tutorship in India, and you who are at the head of this movement are certainly rendering good service both to your people and to your faith by encouraging your fellow-believers to follow in the path of Western culture and education. I have not yet quite given up the idea of visiting India, and, circumstances permitting, of delivering some lectures in the Persian tongue to the Mohammedans of India. If I should see my way to doing so, I should like to come under the patronage of your Society, and thus try to contribute a few small stones to the noble building raised by your admirable efforts.

"Pardon the length of this epistle, which I conclude in the hope of the continuance of our correspondence, and I also beg

you kindly to forward to me regularly the publications of your Society.

"Yours faithfully,

"(*Sig.*) A. VAMBÉRY.

"To Nawab Abdul Latif Bahadur, C.I.E., Calcutta."

I had no idea that this letter would cause any sensation, and I was much surprised to see it published shortly after as a separate pamphlet, with an elaborate preface, and distributed wholesale among the Mohammedans of India. "The leading political event of India"—thus commenced the preface—"is a letter, but not an official or even an open letter. We are not referring to the address of the Viceroy in *propria persona*—as distinguished from the powerful state engine entitled the 'Governor-General in Council'—to the Maharaja Pertap Singh of Cashmere, for this letter has now been before the public some weeks. The letter we call attention to does not come from high quarters, is not in any way an official one; it is a private communication from a poor, though eminent European pandit (scholar). It was published yesterday in the morning papers and appears in this week's edition of *Reis and Rayyet*. We refer to Professor Vambéry's letter to Nawab Abdul Latif Bahadur, &c."

The Indian press occupied itself for days with this letter; it was much commented upon and regarded both by Englishmen and Mohammedans as of great importance. I was invited to visit India as the guest of the Mohammedan Society. I was to be attended by a specially appointed committee, and to make a tour in the country, give public lectures and addresses, and be generally *fêted*. In a word, they wanted to honour me as the friend of England and of Islam. Nawab Abdul Latif Bahadur said in a letter dated Calcutta, 16 Toltollah (12th August), 1890:—

"Your name has become a household word amongst us, and, greatly as we honour you for your noble, unflinching advocacy of Islam in the West, we shall esteem it a high privilege to see you with our own eyes, and listen to you with our own ears."

Remembering the struggles of my early youth, and with a vivid recollection of the insults and humiliations to which I, the

Jew boy, had been subjected in those days, there was something very tempting to me in the thought of going to India, the land of the Rajahs, of wealth and opulence, as an admired and honoured guest. But I was no longer young. I was nearly sixty years old, and at that age sober reality is stronger than vanity. The alluring vision of a reception in India, with eulogies and laurel-wreaths swiftly passed before my eyes, but was instantly dismissed. I declined the invitation with many expressions of gratitude, but kept up my relations with the Mohammedans of India, and also with the Brahmans there, as shown in my correspondence with the highly-cultured editor of the periodical *Reis and Rayyet*, Dr. Mookerjee,[1] with Thakore Sahib (Prince) of Gondal, and other eminent Hindustani scholars and statesmen.

The fact that many of these gentlemen preferably wrote in English, and that some of them even indulged in Latin and Greek quotations, surprised me much at first, for I had not realised that our Western culture had penetrated so far even beyond the precincts of Islam. England has indeed done great things for India, and Bismarck was right when he said, "If England were to lose Shakespeare, Milton, and all her literary heroes, that what she has done for India is sufficient to establish for ever her merit in the world of culture."

My pro-Islamic writings have found much appreciation among the Turkish adherents of the Moslem faith, and my name was well known in Turkey, as I had for many years been writing for the Turkish press, and was in correspondence with several eminent persons there. In consequence of my anti-Russian political writings I had constant intercourse with Tartars from the Crimea and other parts of Russia, who even consulted me in their national and religious difficulties. Some of them asked me for introductions to the Turkish Government, and touching was the sympathy I received from the farthest corners of the Islamic world when once I was confined to bed with a broken leg. Mohammedans from all parts, Osmanlis, Tartars, Persians, Afghans, Hindustanis, in passing through Budapest, scarcely ever

[1] See "*An Indian Journalist*," being the Life and Letters of Dr. S. O. Mookerjee, Calcutta, 1895, pp. 306–315.

failed to call upon me, and to express their gratitude for what little I had done in their interest. Some even suspected me of being a Dervish in disguise, and of using my European incognito in the interests of Islam. This supposition was, I think, mainly due to the stories circulated by some Dervish pilgrims, from all parts of the Islamic world, to the grave of Gülbaba (Rose-father), at Budapest, to whom, as the living reminders of my former adventures, I always gave a most cordial reception.

The Mohammedan saint just mentioned, according to the account of the Osmanli traveller Ewlia Tshelebi (1660), had lived in Hungary before the Turkish dominion, and was buried at Budapest. Soliman's army had revered his grave just as Mohamed II. did that of Ejub in Constantinople after the conquest, and it is touching to note the deep veneration with which this pioneer of Islam is regarded by all true believers in the old world. Turks, Arabs, Persians, Afghans, Indians, Kashmirians, even Tartars from Tobolsk have come to Budapest as pilgrims to his grave, and yet the actual tenets of his faith have never been very clearly defined. At the Peace of Passarowitz the Osmanli stipulated that his grave should be left untouched, and on the other hand the Persian King, Nasreddin Shah, claimed him as a Shiite saint, and even made preparations to restore and embellish his grave.

The Dervish pilgrims regarded this Rose-father with very special devotion. Without money, without any knowledge of the language of the country, they braved all dangers and privations to visit his grave. Some said that he was brother to Kadriye, others that he belonged to the Dshelali order. After spending some days at the humble shrine of the saint, since then beautifully restored, they would come to pay their respects to me also, and I was pleased to receive them. Nothing could be more entertaining than to watch the suspicious glances cast upon me by these tattered, emaciated Moslems My fluency of speech in their several languages, added to the fame of my character as a Dervish, puzzled them greatly, and, encouraged by my cordiality, some made bold to ask me how much longer I intended to keep up my incognito among the unfaithful, and whether it would not be advisable for me to return to the land of the true believers. In reply I pointed to the life and the work of Sheikh Saadi

the celebrated author of the *Gulistan* who, himself a Dervish, lived in various lands amid various religions in order to study mankind, and who left behind him a world-known name. Among these dervishes, although possessed of all the peculiarities and attributes of fanaticism, I detected a good deal of scepticism and cosmopolitanism, carefully hidden, of course, but to my mind fully justifying the proverb: "*Qui multum peregrinatur raro sanctificatur*" ("He who travels much, rarely becomes a saint"). These pilgrims, many of whom in their inmost mind shared my views, carried my name into the remotest regions of the Islamic world. The travelling dervishes may be called the living telegraph wires between the upper and lower strata of the Mohammedan world. From the Tekkes (convents) and bazaars, where they mix with people of every class and nationality, the news they bring travels far and wide, and reaches the inmost circles of family life. And so it came about that many years later I was receiving letters from several Asiatics never personally known to me. Through these relations with the middle classes of the Moslem world I afterwards came in contact with the higher ranks of Asiatic society.

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